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ABSTRACT

This activity booklet is designed to help preschool teachers and caregivers prepare preschoolers to deal with issues of self-esteem, problem solving, health and safety awareness, and crime, drug, and violence prevention on developmentally appropriate levels. It provides background information on drug and violence prevention for 4- and 5-year-olds, on communication with children about drugs, and on the physical, mental, and social development of preschoolers. The booklet contains 19 group activities for use with preschoolers that focus on group cooperation/conflict management/peer interaction; health/safety and self-esteem. These areas address such issues as unsafe situations; tobacco, alcohol, and drug avoidance; child safety and firearms; healthy eating habits and community pride. The activities are carried out through song, charades, strong problem-solving, and visual discrimination. Many of the activities contain reproducible letters to inform parents about the activity's purpose and goals. A guide for parents, a list of resource groups, and a user evaluation form are included. (MDM)

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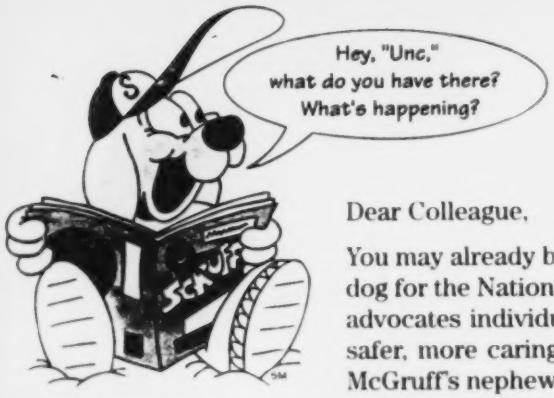


Scruff℠

Dear Colleague,

You may already be familiar with McGruff® the Crime Dog, spokesdog for the National Citizens' Crime Prevention Campaign. McGruff advocates individuals and organizations working together to build safer, more caring communities. We recently introduced Scruff℠, McGruff's nephew—someone children can easily identify with who faces the same kinds of situations they do. Young children find Scruff's energetic character very appealing.

We created this activity book to assist you in preparing preschool and Head Start children to deal with the issues of self-esteem, problem solving, health and safety awareness, and crime, drug, and violence prevention on developmentally appropriate levels.

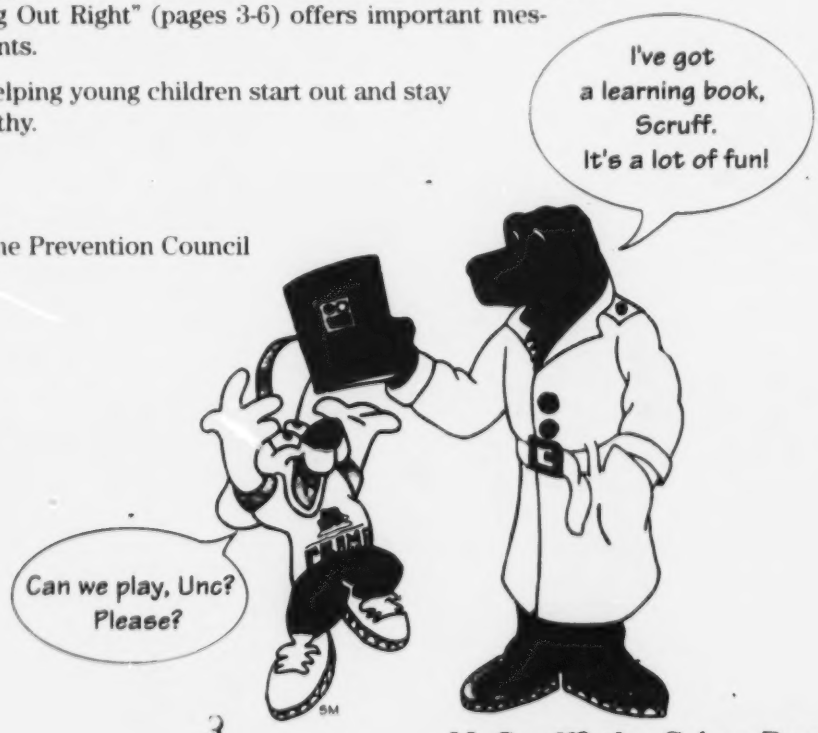
In particular, you may question the importance of alcohol and other drug prevention information for four- and five-year-olds and their caregivers. As you will see in the following sections, it is never too early to start making children aware of these issues and begin teaching attitudes and skills they will need to make wise decisions.

Some of the activities include specific mention of McGruff and Scruff. All are positive and upbeat. Most don't even discuss drugs or violence directly, but focus on teaching the skills children will need to make safe and healthy choices.

Along with the activities are sample letters to parents. Use these as they are or adapt them to fit your own style. They provide ways for parents to support at home the initiatives you have begun. In addition, "Starting Out Right" (pages 3-6) offers important messages to parents.

Thanks for helping young children start out and stay safe and healthy.

National Crime Prevention Council



McGruff® the Crime Dog

TAKE A BITE OUT OF CRIME®

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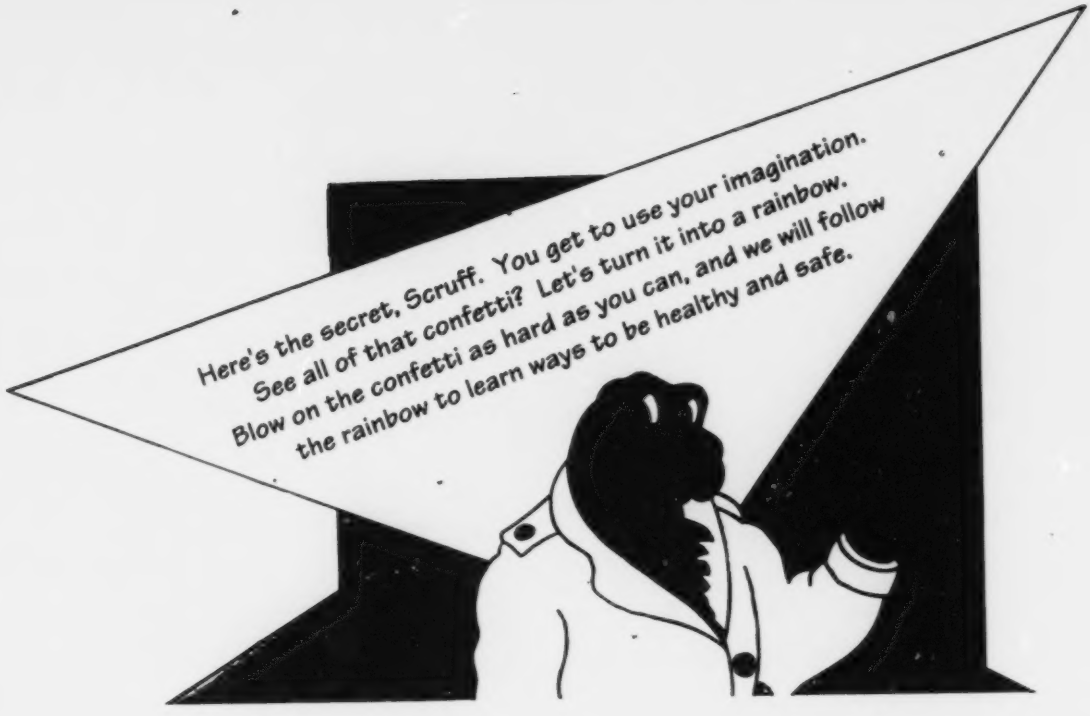

Here's the secret, Scruff. You get to use your imagination.
See all of that confetti? Let's turn it into a rainbow.
Blow on the confetti as hard as you can, and we will follow
the rainbow to learn ways to be healthy and safe.

Drug and Violence Prevention for Four- and Five-Year-Olds?

Drug and violence prevention messages that reach young children are a necessity, not a luxury. It is tempting to think that four- and five-year-olds don't really understand about drugs and violence and that they cannot benefit from activities and discussions designed to prevent violence and alcohol and other drug use. The sad truth is that many children are exposed to alcohol and other drugs and violence at home, in the neighborhood, on TV, or at a friend's or relative's home. Sometimes it seems that these children are far wiser than their years. The fact is, they are often fearful and anxious. The impact of drugs and violence on children often leaves scars that are not easily healed. Teachers and other caregivers can help protect these children and assist them in gaining strong self-concepts and skills needed to make good choices for the rest of their lives.

Parents and other caregivers are the child's best and earliest resource in this task. It starts as soon as the child begins crawling or opening cabinet doors. "No! Dangerous stuff there!" Parents install safety latches on cabinet doors and move cleaning and other hazardous materials to safer places. They move aspirin and other medicines out of the reach of small children.

As children get a little older, they need to know that certain drugs (medicines) are given to them to make them better when they are sick. Children need to learn to trust their doctor and parents and to be taught that these same medicines/drugs can hurt children's bodies if not taken appropriately. Everyone needs to remember to take all medications by carefully following the doctor's directions about dosage, frequency, and combinations with other medications.

Children learn by observing what parents, caregivers, and other adults in their lives do. They can be confused when they hear "don't do that" and then see adults drink to excess, become violent or moody, pop pills, smoke, or use (and even sell) drugs. Key attitudes formed in the preschool years reflect a combination of the child's perceptions and his or her environment. Thus, many factors that could trigger later substance abuse and violence may be established in early childhood.

Sometimes very young children seem to know more about the drug scene than you do. You may realize that they are exposed to violence and crime in their homes and neighborhoods. It may cause you to feel uneasy and a little frightened. Sometimes children can be talking about drugs, and you don't even know it because you are unfamiliar with the vocabulary of the world of drugs. Yet it may be part of their world.

Spotting and Preventing Problems

Very few four- and five-year-old children will be directly involved in drug use. However, many young children suffer from the effects of drug use by someone close to them. There are some signs or warnings in children's behavior that can alert you to these types of problems: a smiling, happy child becomes quiet and withdrawn; a child refuses to participate in activities he or she usually enjoys; a child has trouble resting during nap time and seems frustrated; a child sits and "stares into space," withdrawing from reality.

When you observe these things in children, it is time to take action. Here are some ways to prepare:

- Become familiar with facts on legal and illegal drugs.
- Learn their street names.
- Know what they look like.
- Read as much as you can about successful prevention programs and any resources available.
- Observe and make notes on changes in students' behavior and moods.
- Establish and maintain close relationships with parents and other caregivers.
- Encourage children to talk about their feelings, fears, and concerns, including those about drug-related activities.
- Realize that these problems won't just go away.
- Offer support, help, guidance, and encouragement.
- Provide developmentally appropriate, enjoyable activities that help teach skills children will need to make healthy and safe choices.

Recent research supports the strong need for quality, ongoing substance abuse prevention programs for four- and five-year-olds. These programs promote positive self-concepts by focusing on self-esteem and problem-solving and decision-making skills in children. Other important skills that young children need to learn are creative thinking, conflict resolution, kindness, listening, and sharing.

Successful prevention efforts can protect children by fostering resiliency. Resilient children—those children who are able to overcome problems and adjust to change—tend to display several or all of the following characteristics: 1) an active approach to solving problems, 2) acceptance by a caring adult, 3) ability to maintain a positive outlook on life (and to view their experiences constructively), and 4) a sense of humor. Teachers and other caregivers have it within their power to help children gain and nurture these capacities.

These concepts have been the focus in the development of the activities you will find in this book. Set the stage for parent involvement: photocopy the next two sections and send them home to parents to help them better understand the importance of these kinds of activities. "Starting Out Right" is designed specifically for parents and discusses these central concepts; it provides examples of how they can be reinforced at home with four- and five-year-olds. "Talking With Young Children About Drugs" can be used by both teachers and parents to help ensure that children receive consistent information about these issues both at school and at home.

Starting Out Right

What You Can Do to Help Your Four- and Five-Year-Olds Be Violence, Alcohol, and Drug Free

Parents are a child's first and most important teachers. The activities and skills that you teach very young children play a major role in their success later in life. By the time four- and five-year-olds enter kindergarten, they are already well on their way in personality development.

Parenting is difficult but rewarding. Those who are trying to develop good parenting skills have learned from other successful parents, teachers, books, magazines, and videos. Being a good parent is not dependent on having a lot of money. It is dependent on the quality of parenting, consistency of rules, limit setting, and patience, love, and understanding.

Children will develop attitudes and skills, no matter what. You can either let them learn these on their own or you can teach them the attitudes and skills you want them to have. Your child will be involved in many learning activities this year at school that will help foster these attitudes and skills. When we do an activity at school that would be fun for you to share with your child, we will send you a letter describing what you can do to reinforce the particular theme at home.

Helping your child gain positive self-esteem, develop effective skills for problem solving and decision making, and become self-disciplined and emotionally stable is an enormous task! It takes a long time—one day at a time, but the results will last a lifetime!

Below are descriptions of how to help your child grow every day in ways that will make him or her feel safer—by building self-esteem and problem-solving and decision-making skills.

Self-Esteem

Positive self-esteem has been identified as a major factor in a child's success. As parents, you have the ability to help your children develop positive self-esteem, since their image of self is first formed in the home. Children tend to see themselves as reflections of what they think parents see. They feel good about themselves when they feel valued and loved, competent and successful, accepted by others, secure, appreciated, and worthwhile. Parents can help children feel this way by letting them know they have a special place in the family.

Build self-esteem by loving unconditionally. Love the child for who he is, not because of what he does. When criticizing, talk about the particular behavior that you don't like, not the child. Praise in public, criticize in private.

Show affection. Hug, touch, and smile; tell your child you love her. It's impossible to do it too often—every day, before school, after school, and again in the evening.

Spend focused time together. Watch a special show with your child and ask what he liked best. Take a relaxing walk with your child and talk about the day's activities. Talk to him while doing everyday things. For example, "While we're fixing supper, let me tell you about the time I made a special cake for a neighbor." "While I help you with a bath, let me tell you about what I liked when I was a little boy just your age."

Give reasonable responsibility. Children need to feel that they can contribute and are needed. They like to help, especially when they are given credit for their contribution. For example, let your child put the forks and spoons on the table. First, explain how it should be done, then thank her for helping. (Be sure not to redo the task, even if it was not done perfectly). Give tasks your child can do successfully. Children can't wash clothes at age four, but they can take their dirty clothes to the laundry room.

Praise effort. Children will do some things right, and they will make mistakes. When they can't tie their shoes, tell them it is hard to do and help them with the task. When they spread more peanut butter on the counter than on the piece of bread, just help wipe up the counter. Be sure to let your child know you are proud of him for trying!

Teach your child to communicate. Give each child in the family time to talk when everyone is together. If one member continues to interrupt, have a small stuffed animal or toy that the person speaking can hold for her "turn to share," and then pass it on. Encourage all family members to be good listeners.

Proudly display your child's work. Let your child put up papers brought home from school. Put up a picture of your child doing something he likes to do and does well—throwing a ball, putting together a puzzle, etc. After a week or so, when the space is filled, help your child keep a few favorite things in a scrapbook.

Expect your child to do his or her best both academically and behaviorally. But remember not to compare the child to an older sibling or neighbor who "could do that when they were your age," etc. Value the uniqueness in your child and realize that she will learn and grow in her own time frame.

Use language that promotes self-esteem: "You can do it!" "That's a good job." "You really worked a long time on that." "I can tell you enjoyed doing that picture!" Avoid statements that would lower a child's self-esteem: "The last time you tried that, you broke it." "You better let somebody help you." "You can never do things without making a mess." Send the message that he can.

Problem Solving and Decision Making

Problem solving is what you do when you know you have a problem but don't know how to fix it right away. In contrast, decision making is what you do when you know what your options are and must choose between them. In teaching both these skills, give your child plenty of opportunities to solve his or her own problems and make the decisions that are appropriate.

Problem Solving

Help your child develop problem-solving skills at home. You may want to follow these steps:

1) Figure out what the problem is.

> For example: The child is often late for school.

2) Determine who "owns" the problem.

> Does the parent get up late? Are there too many things going on in the morning? Does the child forget where something is that she has to take to school?
>
> In our example: The child often forgets where something is that must be taken to school and spends too much time trying to find it.

3) Solve the identified problem by helping your child think about what she needs to do (i.e., be ready to leave at a specified time) and brainstorming with her about ways to accomplish the goal. For example:

> Have Dad keep the things the child needs to take to school and hand them to her upon departure.
>
> Have a place to put school things beside the door.

Decision Making

When several options are available, children need to learn strategies to make the best possible decision. Help your child develop decision-making skills in these ways:

1) Brainstorm the pros and cons of each option.

2) Let your child make the decision that he decides will be best for him.

> If your child makes a decision that depends too much on others, you can say, "Let's review and see if you are doing your job." Help him to see that he can decide how to solve the problem. Be encouraging. In the problem-solving situation described above, you could say, "Good for you! I see you put your things by the door. You'll be ready tomorrow!" Or if you realize he has forgotten, say, "Is there something you need to do to be ready for school on time in the morning?" Your child will usually hurry to do it!

3) Let children make as many decisions as they are capable of, while structuring choices realistically. For example, let your child choose between just two options, not more. Gradually let the choices become more flexible.

> Let your child choose a snack. "Do you want a banana or an apple?"
>
> Ask, "Do you want to take your bath before or after I read you a story?" (The choice is not *whether* to take a bath, but *when*.)

If you are grocery shopping, and your child begs for certain foods, allow her to choose a specific number of things. Stick to the number. Allow some putting back and switching around (within reason), but don't give in to buying more than you agreed to or you will fight this battle on every shopping trip!

4) Let your child make small mistakes and live with the consequences. It is far better to make mistakes and learn from them on relatively small matters than to miss learning this important life skill. Leaving a lunch box at school and having to bring a bagged lunch to school the following day is often a far better "teacher" than having a parent remind the child again and again to remember to bring the lunch box home!

5) Teach the importance of following through on decisions. Parents can set the example. A perfect use of this could be household rules. Be sure that rules are simple, understood, fair, and realistic. Let your child have a voice in making some rules. Listen to his ideas, then enforce the rules. It is better to have a few rules that are consistently enforced than many rules that are okay to break sometimes but not at other times. Inconsistency will confuse your child and encourage him to test limits.

Rules and limits are important. Research has shown that parents who are too permissive often have children with lower self-esteem and decision-making abilities. When children are forced to make decisions with neither the knowledge nor the experience to do so capably, they are often fearful and insecure. Children want help and guidelines. When parents don't make or enforce rules, children may think their parents don't care about what happens to them.

In households where there is opportunity for children to give their own ideas or to question a rule, they realize that their opinions are heard and considered. Children from such homes are more likely to feel respected, valued, and appreciated. The point is not for them to get "their own way," but for them to have a real part in the decision-making process.

Nurture your child by telling her daily that you love her and that she is special and capable. Help your child "visualize success." Encourage her to try again and again, like "The Little Engine That Could." Don't make too much of mistakes—they're part of learning. Providing emotional support and promoting self-esteem go hand in hand.

When appropriate, be honest about your own feelings. For instance, when a friend or relative dies, don't hide your grief. Let your child see you cry. Explain that death is a part of life. When someone is sick, be honest and reassuring about it. When there are financial problems, explain what you can and can't afford. Divorce is upsetting for children. Tell your child why the divorce is happening, and what will happen to him. Reassure him that he is not the problem. Show your love. In all these situations, tell your child the truth, at the same time realizing that it is not necessary to share all the facts. Your child should not feel that these are problems that he must solve. The child should understand that no matter what, he is loved.

Talking With Young Children About Drugs

Because young children in some communities are exposed to drugs and drug use, there is a need to begin discussions and prevention education early. Many educators and parents are concerned about exposing young children to information about drugs. They worry that such information may frighten children or stimulate a child's curiosity to experiment. To avoid these dangers, adults should be:

- careful to mention only the specific drugs that children will have to deal with.
- clear about the harmful consequences of drug use (without exaggerating).
- clear in their attitudes about why children should not get involved in drugs.

Every community is unique in both its strengths and weaknesses. You know best which issues need to be addressed in your community. Hopefully, you won't need to use most of this information. However, if you feel it is necessary to talk about specific drugs—because they are something children in your community might be exposed to—you may find the information below helpful. Use the questions your children ask as a guide for how much they are ready to discuss. Follow their lead. When they've heard enough, they'll let you know by changing the subject!

Young children are more likely to be familiar with one or more of four drugs: alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, and cocaine/crack.

There is another problem affecting a growing number of children in the United States. More and more elementary school and junior high children are inhaling a wide variety of legal products that can be bought for everyday household use. The chemicals in these products—such as glues, paints, cleaners, fuels, and propellants—can be very dangerous if used improperly. According to the International Institute on Inhalant Abuse, there are over 1,400 commonly abused products on the market today. Because many of these types of products are normally found in households, children need to be taught the appropriate uses for these substances. When caregivers discuss the dangers of these products with young children, care needs to be taken that children learn about the harmful effects of these chemicals without learning exactly how they are abused (for example, by huffing paint sprayed into an empty soda can). Because inhalant abuse is increasing among children as young as 10 or 11 as well as through the high school years, it is important to point out the dangers to younger children.

What to Say to Young Children About Certain Drugs

Alcohol is a drink for adults. However, it can be harmful if used in an unsafe or unwise manner. Alcohol can change a person's mood—it can make that person loud, sad, funny, relaxed, confused, upset, or angry. Alcohol can make it hard to see and think clearly; it can make it hard to play sports and dangerous to drive a car. Alcohol can hurt the body. It is against the law for children to drink it, and it hurts children more than adults because children are smaller and still growing.

Tobacco products are made from a plant that has a drug called nicotine in it. Tobacco is usually smoked in cigarettes, pipes, or cigars, but it can also be chewed. Tobacco smoke hurts both the people who use it and the people around them. The smoke hurts the lungs, which help us breathe, and the heart, which pumps our blood. That is why it is against the law for children to purchase cigarettes. Cigarettes are unhealthy for everyone—both children and adults.

Marijuana comes from a plant. It is sometimes smoked in cigarette-style sticks called "joints." Marijuana hurts the lungs, which help us breathe, and the heart, which pumps our blood. Smoking marijuana may change a person's mood and make the brain work differently. It makes it hard to think clearly. Marijuana is also called "dope," "pot," "weed," and "grass." It is a drug that is against the law for grown-ups and children.

Cocaine comes from a plant and looks like powder. People sniff the powder up their noses. Some people smoke little pieces called crack in pipes. Others give themselves shots of cocaine; this is extremely dangerous, because using a dirty needle could cause some serious diseases. People use cocaine because they think it will make them feel good. It is very hard to stop using cocaine once a person tries it—even if the person has used it only once! Cocaine hurts the brain, the heart, the lungs, and can even kill people. It is against the law for everyone to use cocaine.

Inhalants are common items that you may have around the house. They include glues, paints, cleaners, gasoline, and sprays (propelled out of a can under pressure). They are to be used only for their intended purpose—for example, for cleaning. They must never be tasted or held close to your face, because that would be very dangerous. People who breathe their fumes (the chemicals from them) deeply in order to get "high" (a funny feeling) can hurt their brain or other organs in their body, such as the lungs, heart, or kidneys. While it's not dangerous to use products such as glue properly (for example, in an art project), it would not be okay to hold glue close to your face and sniff it deeply.

Remember: *This information about talking to young children about drugs is simply a guide for you in your discussion of health and safety. Use your discretion in choosing which drugs to discuss with your children.*

The Ways Four- and Five-Year-Olds Grow

In teaching young children you have a formidable task. Each child is different. Your challenge is to nurture and encourage each one to gain emotional strength and to learn the skills needed to become the best he or she can be. The following is a review of the developmental stages of four- and five- year-olds that you are probably already well aware of. These principles were taken into account in the design of the activities in this book.

As you well know, these early years are the wonder years for children. At this stage students are curious, eager, and excited to learn. They need to move about—touching, talking, and exploring. Some experts believe (and you may already agree) that programs for four- and five-year-olds should be play-oriented with a focus on nonacademic learning, both active and incidental. The early years should be supported in an atmosphere of play, with lots of activities balanced by periods of rest. Outdoor play, free exploration, and opportunities for creativity are all components of an effective child-initiated program. Teacher-directed activities such as story reading, music, drama, science, math, and social studies are necessary to supplement this environment of discovery.

The intricate interaction between the child's physical, mental, social, and emotional development must be acknowledged in planning and implementing quality programs for four- and five-year-olds.

The following is a list of developmental stages of four- and five-year-olds compiled from experts nationwide:

The Four-Year-Old

Physical Development

- Slows down in growth; likes to wiggle and move but can sit still and play for a reasonable amount of time.
- Uses large muscles to run, skip, jump, and climb.
- Is very active and has high drive and energy spurts.
- Improves in small muscle coordination. Can cut, paste, dress himself or herself, brush teeth, go to the bathroom alone, help younger siblings. Can recognize shapes and colors.
- Tires easily and still needs rest periods.

Mental Development

- Asks many questions: How? Why? What for?
- Is fascinated by words—the sound of them and their effect upon others; experiments with inappropriate language as well as poetry.

- Loves to pretend, make up stories, role play. Often has a very "real" pretend playmate who has to be seated at the table, have a space on the car seat, etc. (Listen in on a conversation with this pretend playmate. You can learn a lot about the child!)
- Likes to touch, feel, taste, explore.
- Likes to play with blocks, sand, water, paint, dirt, and rocks.
- Learns through exploring (walks in the woods, visits to the zoo, field trips around town, etc.).
- Moves about from one thing to another, noticing many details.
- Wants to choose his or her own food.
- Is developing a sense of humor.
- Likes praise from others.
- Thinks he or she can do "anything."

Social Development

- Needs clear limits; is learning to accept rules. Models behavior after significant adults. Requires redirection toward acceptable activity and can be stubborn, bossy, and impolite (likes to show off).
- Is also friendly and cooperative; plays well in small groups of two, three, or four.
- Likes to play alone as well.
- Can accept simple responsibilities and can take turns most of the time.
- Is beginning to go beyond the confines of his or her backyard for friends and adventures.

Emotional Development

- Loves to use the word "no."
- May change moods from cooperative to stubborn, happy to angry, in a flash.
- Has increased self-confidence as new skills are acquired.
- Has occasional fears and feelings of insecurity. These feelings and fears can vary significantly depending on home environment and community support.
- Learns well through concrete activities relevant to particular interests and experiences. Learns by doing, observing, and interacting informally with other children and adults.

- Feels good about solving his or her own problems. Will experiment and try again if positive responses are received.
- Often wants far more independence then he or she can handle.

The Five-Year-Old

Physical Development

- Increases activity. Exhibits better balance; rides tricycle (maybe even a two-wheeler), kicks balls, hops, skips, jumps, moves to rhythms.
- Finds physical exercises easier; can still be restless when tired.
- Demonstrates increased preference for right or left hand. Likes doing things with hands—painting, cutting, pasting, drawing, hammering, building (strives for reality in artwork but is frustrated by limitations in ability).
- Is improving small motor skills. Can draw letters and shapes, put small objects in slim containers, pattern beads on a string, etc. Spends longer periods of time putting puzzles together, and likes to keep doing the same ones faster and faster—especially when praised for a job well done!

Mental Development

- Is still curious; likes to learn new facts and repeat them to others.
- Can say full name, age, and usually at least part of his or her address.
- Is possessive of toys and other belongings and wants them in their proper place. Likes to tell stories and have responsibilities.
- Likes to dictate stories and "read" what he or she has said. Is interested in words, responds to word labels at home and at school (chair, table, phone, sink). Likes to play guessing games, and can make up questions for others.
- Can handle more complicated meanings and concepts. Likes to be part of adult conversations, especially at home.
- Begins to distinguish make-believe from reality.

Social Development

- Is deeply interested in family relationships.
- Increases sensitivity to others and interest in them. Enjoys play with family members and can help work out relationships with others.
- Thrives on freedom but needs limits.
- Tends to be socially conforming.

- Has a great imagination—likes to pretend, dress up, and assume imagined roles.
- Has a special friend, but will play well with four or five children.
- Is protective of younger brothers and sisters.
- Is gaining patience.

Emotional Development

- Likes conforming and pleasing adults. Family and friends are main interests (a relatively quiet time emotionally).
- May lie and/or deny responsibility for own actions.
- Likes being cared for, responds to requests for help, usually asks for permission.
- Is easily embarrassed and sensitive to criticism.
- Begins to be jealous of friends, notices differences.
- Responds positively to appropriate praise, encouragement, and smiles; delighted by adult praise.
- Is learning to accept logical consequences for actions.
- Needs frequent and instant rewards for good behavior.
- Is comforted by acceptance of mistakes and learns best when "caught being good."

Activities Section

The following activities are designed to help you foster self-esteem and problem-solving and decision-making skills in the children you work with. Feel free to use some or all of the activities, or adapt them as you see fit.

The activity pages are clearly labeled for teachers and parents.

Please note: *Several of the activities lend themselves to further discussion at home between parent and child. These activities include a letter to parents for you to photocopy and send home or use as the basis for your own letter.*

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Let's Meet McGruff and Scruff

Objectives

- Oral and written word connection
- Oral communication
- Familiarization with McGruff and Scruff

Materials

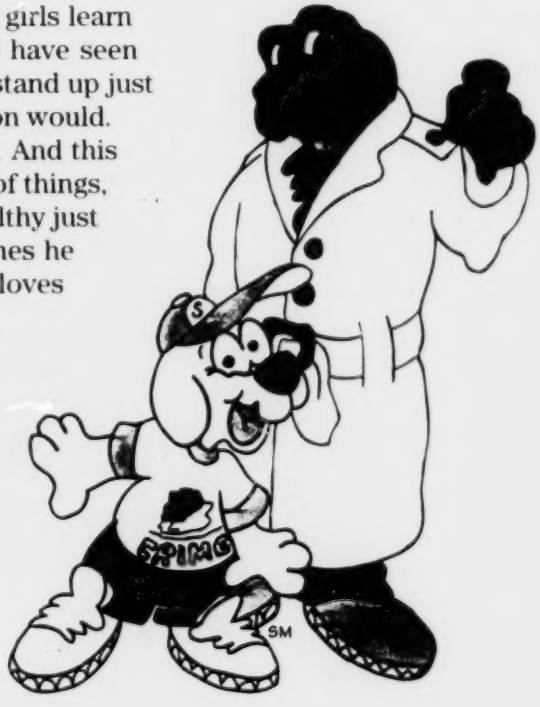
- Chart paper
- Markers

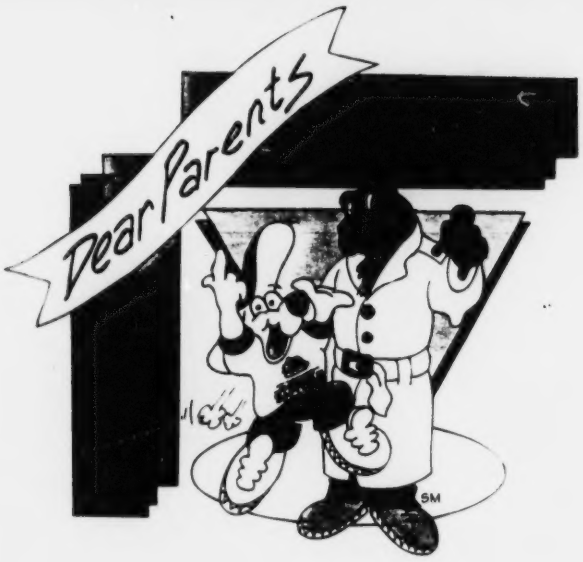
Activity

Divide the children into small groups of four to six. Display the picture of McGruff and Scruff on the cover of the activity book. Read or tell the story below that introduces McGruff and Scruff and describes what the characters look like, say, and do. Ask the children to then retell, in their own words, what they learned from the story. As each student gives a short sentence, the teacher writes down word for word what each child says on a sheet of chart paper. After six or eight sentences have been written, read them aloud to the group. (Optional: each student can then take turns reading the parts he or she contributed, with assistance from the adult as necessary.) Type the children's story and copy it for them to take home to share with their families.

Story

Meet McGruff the Crime Dog! He helps boys and girls learn how to "Take A Bite Out Of Crime." Maybe you have seen him on television. He is a big brown dog. He can stand up just like a person. He wears a raincoat, just like a person would. He looks for ways to help boys and girls be safer. And this is Scruff. McGruff is his uncle. Scruff knows a lot of things, and he's eager to learn more and grow big and healthy just like McGruff. He asks a lot of questions. Sometimes he has a hard time making safe choices. McGruff loves Scruff very much! He teaches Scruff how to have a happy and healthy life.





Today we learned about our friend McGruff and his nephew, Scruff. McGruff is the Crime Dog who helps "Take A Bite Out Of Crime." He is a popular symbol that most children recognize. We will be talking about McGruff and how he wants children to be safe, healthy, and drug free. His nephew Scruff is a happy, eager fellow who learns from and helps his Uncle McGruff. Sometimes Scruff has a hard time making safe choices, just as children do, so McGruff helps him just as grown-ups help children.

Your child helped create a story about McGruff and Scruff and has brought home a copy of the story the class wrote. Ask your child about the story. Read it together and ask which part he or she contributed. Encourage your child to bring home more stories to share with you.

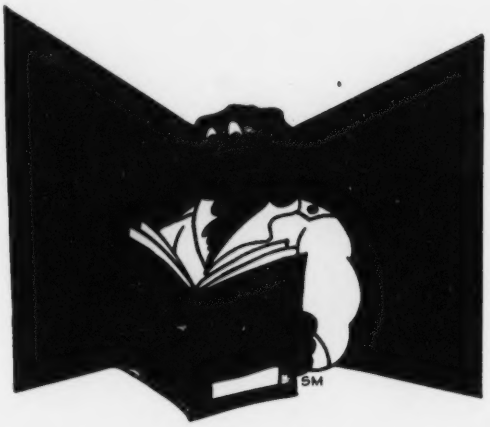
Here's another idea: Tell your child a short story about some childhood experience of yours. Write it down together or draw something about it (or both). Don't forget to praise your child for his or her work!

Sincerely,

Story Problem Solving

Objectives

- Conflict resolution
- Problem solving
- Communication
- Dramatization



Materials

- Activity sheet
- Age-appropriate story with a decision point and different solutions to the problem presented

Activity

It is best to start with a short, familiar story, such as "The Three Little Pigs," "Little Red Riding Hood," or similar story with a problem presented.

Please note: *In the take-home letter to parents, you will need to write in the name of the story you use before copying it.*

For example, after reading "The Three Little Pigs," have the children reenact the story. Let the audience respond to how well each child did. "Let's clap for _____. She played a part." Focus on the positive. Talk about the parts the children remembered. Why was a part easy to remember? Did the children name a conflict/dilemma? If not, try to channel the discussion toward a problem presented in the story.

Several problems can be identified in "The Three Little Pigs:" the pigs needed houses, the first two pigs built their houses too poorly, and the wolf wanted to eat them.

Ask the children, "What problem did the pigs have when the wolf arrived?" After they give their responses, ask, "What could the pigs have done differently or better?"

The children need to understand clearly the problems and possible solutions before proceeding to the follow-up drawing activity. Pass out copies of the next page. Tell the children to draw a picture that shows a problem from the story in the first box and a picture that shows how the problem could be solved in the second box.

Questions to Ask Children About Their Pictures

How did you decide which problem to draw?

What was something the characters could have done differently or better?

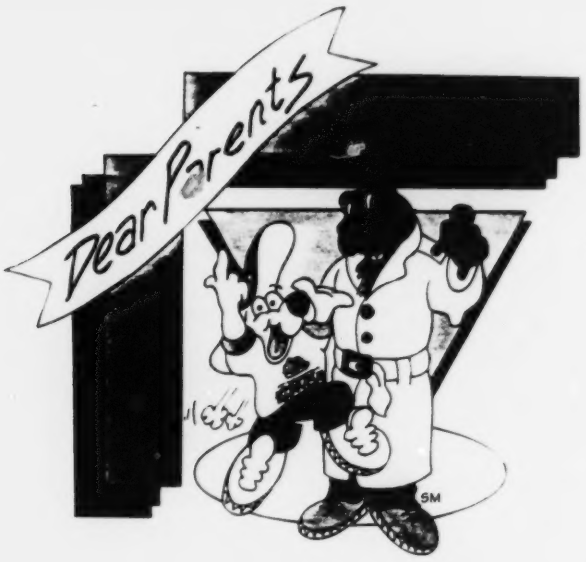
Can you make up a story about someone having a problem?

Please note: *For four-year-olds and some older children, it may be necessary to do the drawing activity as a group instead of having students do the activity individually. The group could identify the problem and solutions to be drawn. The teacher sketches pictures (on large construction paper) to show the problem and solution, which are then colored in or added to by the children.*

Story Problem Solving

Draw a problem from the story.

Draw how the problem could be solved.



We are trying to teach the children that there can be several good solutions to some problems. They need to identify the problem, think of the choices, and consider the consequences for each choice. This will help them learn to make better decisions.

Today we read _____ , a well-known story in which the characters have problems to solve. Perhaps you would like to discuss the story with your child. Specific questions about the plot (for example, who was in the story? what did the characters do? did the characters have tough choices to make?) can help your child think more about choices. You may want to discuss different solutions to problems your child would like to talk about or something that is more tailored to the experiences of your family. Stories read at home or television shows watched together sometimes offer a good opportunity to discuss choices and consequences.

Encouraging your child now to share what's happening at school and in other areas of life will help build communication between you. It also lets your child know that his or her experiences and feelings—good and bad—are important to you. It doesn't need to take a long time, and it should end on a happy note.

Sincerely,

Can You Guess It?

Objectives

- Group participation
- Dramatization

Materials

- A list of charade ideas that dramatize healthy and safe activities (see below)

Activity

Have the children sit comfortably on the floor. Explain that you are going to pretend to do something, and the children will try to guess what you are doing. Make sure they understand that no one should talk out loud, but that they should first just watch carefully and think. Tell the students, "When you think you have the answer, raise your hand. Then wait to be called on." After you have modeled two or three charades and the children have caught on to how the game is played, let the next person who guesses correctly have the chance to be "on stage." Explain the process to the children:

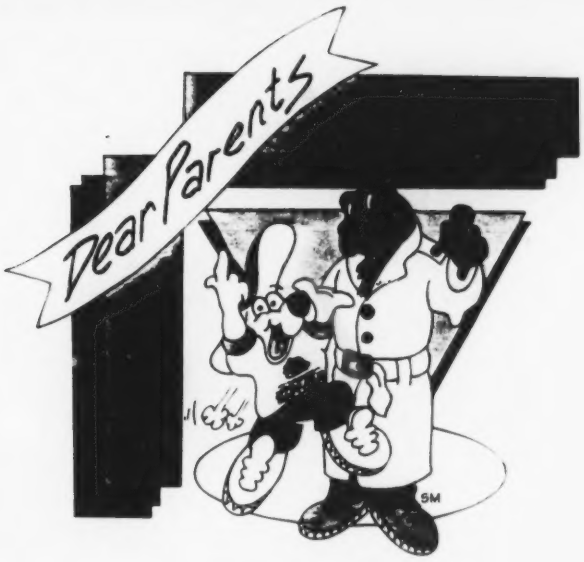
- The person up front is called the actor.
- He or she cannot say anything.
- He or she will try to pretend to do something silently. We call this pantomime.

You may want to write the charade activity ideas on index cards for children to draw out of a hat. You can help them read their card by whispering their charade into their ear. Remind the other children, "When you think you know what the person is doing, raise your hand. Don't give the answer away until I call on you."

If the children have difficulty guessing the action being pantomimed, give verbal clues as the actor acts it out again. (For example, if the action is playing the piano, give clues such as, "His hands are moving while his fingers do something," "You can hear something because of what he is doing," etc.) Try to give plenty of time to let the children think before you give any verbal clues. You may have to give concrete suggestions to the actor as well.

Charade Idea List

combing hair	playing the piano	dancing
beating a drum	kicking a ball	stirring with a spoon
swimming	throwing a ball	coloring
making a sandwich	sweeping	hopping/jumping
painting a picture	getting dressed	reading a book
brushing teeth	being different animals	being a crossing guard
skating	eating (an apple/banana)	dancing like a ballerina



Today at school we played "Can You Guess It?" (very much like the charades game you may remember playing as a child). The children took turns acting out many different activities. You have probably played this game before, perhaps even with your children. Children love to ham it up, and they have great imaginations, so they always give a wonderful, creative show.

Encourage your child to act out something that he or she (or a friend) acted out at school today. This activity would be fun for your child to teach to the whole family, if they are not already familiar with it. Another version of this activity could be to develop a list of things family members do around the house. You could then take turns acting these out for one another.

Enjoy the creativity. Ham it up yourself—your child will love it!

Sincerely,

What's Missing?

Objectives

- Visual discrimination
- Problem solving
- Familiarization with Scruff and McGruff

Materials

- Copies of activity sheet with four pictures

Activity

This activity may either be done one on one—child and adult, or with a small group of two to four children and one adult. Adapt these instructions to your situation.

"Here are some pictures of good friends who help us learn to be safe and healthy. But things are missing from some of the pictures. Can you find what's missing and point to where it should go? Tell me what is missing. Can you find the picture that does not have anything missing?" Or, instead of having the children tell you what is missing, ask them to draw what is missing and then share their pictures with you or the group.

Variation

Another "What's Missing?" game starts with a bag containing eight to ten objects. These could include items found around the classroom, such as crayons, markers, paint brushes, different colored blocks, paper clips, small math manipulatives, or other items you have at your disposal and wish to include. You could include Scruff and McGruff dolls or pictures as some of the items.

1) Put three objects out on a large mat or piece of paper, and have a small group of students sitting in a circle.

2) Have the students name each item as you point to it.

3) Have the children close their eyes while you remove one object and put it behind your back.

4) The children then open their eyes and guess what's missing.

5) Place another object from the bag on the mat with the remaining two objects, and repeat steps 2-4. Continue until all items are out or the children become tired of playing.

Please note: *If you use a thematic approach to your teaching, you may want to incorporate your themes into this game. For example, for a transportation theme, use toy cars, trucks, trains, and boats; for a sports theme, use sporting equipment, etc.*

What's Missing?

McGruff and his nephew Scruff play helping roles in keeping children safe and healthy. Compare how pictures 2, 3, and 4 are different from picture 1. What different things are missing in pictures 2, 3, and 4?

1.

2.

3.

4.

Your child has been learning about being observant by working with pictures of some very special friends who help keep children safe and healthy. As you go over the paper your child brought home, have him or her name each friend. Ask your child to show you the missing parts from pictures 2, 3, and 4.

You might want to play the "What's Missing?" game together. This will help your child to be a more alert and careful observer. Take turns with your child. You should go first.

Say, "Take a good look at what I am wearing. Now turn around. I will change something about how I look, and you guess what it is." At first do very obvious things to make it easy, like taking off a shoe or a scarf. To make it more difficult, you could also add something to your appearance (for example, a hat) or change your facial expressions.

Your child might also enjoy playing this game with a brother, sister, or grandparent.

Sincerely,

Singing Games

Objectives

- Following directions
- Creativity
- Cooperation

Materials

- Space to move about

Activity

Have the children sit in a circle on the floor. Explain that you are going to play a singing game and everyone will have a turn to participate.

Using the tune to "Frère Jacques (Are You Sleeping?)," sing the following song. Sing a verse and then ask all to join in. Act out movements as appropriate. As children become familiar with the routine (that day or another), let them call out names and state the movement themselves.

"Where is_____? Where is _____? (use same name twice)

Please stand up, please stand up.

(Dance, hop, tiptoe, walk backwards) around the group, _____ (same name)

(Dance, hop, tiptoe, walk backwards) around the group, _____ (same name)

Now sit down. Now sit down."

Variations

Change the words, using a different child and a new "activity" each time you play the game. Change the tune by creating your own or adapting other familiar tunes to new lyrics.

Examples

Instead of "dance/hop around the circle," say "What good food can you eat?" Ask a child to either say one food while going around the circle or say as many healthy foods as he or she can think of before getting back to his or her place.

Say, "Who helps us to be safe?" Child can say "McGruff, McGruff" or "Scruff, Scruff, Scruff" or "police officers (or firefighters, nurses, family) help us out."

Encourage children to come up with their own answers, not simply repeat what another child has just said.

Your child learned a new song and game sung to a tune you may know—"Frère Jacques (Are You Sleeping?)." Ask your child to teach it to you, then sing it together.

"Where is_____? Where is _____? (use same name twice)

Please stand up, please stand up.

(Dance, hop, tiptoe, walk backwards) around the group, _____ (same name)

(Dance, hop, tiptoe, walk backwards) around the group, _____ (same name)

Now sit down. Now sit down."

Ask other family members to play. With your child's help, think up different activities to do.

This kind of activity helps strengthen your child's imagination, encourages cooperative group play, and helps with learning to follow directions.

Have a good evening.

Sincerely,

What Would You Do If...?

Objectives

- Decision making
- Working cooperatively

Materials

- "What If..." situations listed below
- Chart paper and marker (optional)

Activity

Choose one of the following "What If..." situations (or make up a "What If..." situation of your own):

- You play with your class's McGruff puppet and spill juice on it. Your best friend is the only one who sees you.
- You're playing outside, and a stranger asks you to help find a lost kitten.
- A friend offers to share her good-tasting cough medicine with you.
- You find a dirty needle (syringe) outside next to a trash can.
- You're playing at a friend's house, and the friend offers to show you a gun.

Please note: *The first time you do this activity, you may want to model the entire process outlined below. Otherwise, discuss the situations as a group.*

- Explain the "What If. ." situation to the children.
- Brainstorm potential solutions as a group and record them on chart paper (recording is optional, but may help you keep track of group's ideas).
- Discuss the consequences of each solution.
- Ask children which solution they think is best and why.

Make it clear that there may be more than one "right" decision. Decisions are based on what is best after considering choices and consequences. McGruff and Scruff could be included by asking, "What would McGruff/Scruff do in this case?"

You could also incorporate this strategy into problem solving in the classroom. For example, if two children are having a disagreement over a particular book or toy, the class could quickly discuss the situation according to the process described above and try to come up with a group solution.

Recently, we have been working on decision-making and problem-solving skills. The children have talked about how to think of choices in various situations and how to choose the best alternative.

Many things you do every day can help your child strengthen these and other skills that will assist them in growing up healthy and safe. Some of the possibilities are listed below. Emphasis is on learning while doing, not on homework, yet the goals are the same—strengthening of skills.

This Activity	Uses These Skills
Sorting laundry; putting groups of sorted clothes in the washer, dryer, dresser drawers, or closets.	Likenesses, differences, sorting, organizing.
Setting the table.	Sequencing, organizing.
Planning meals.	Sequencing, organizing, problem solving.
Doing daily chores (making the bed, putting dirty clothes in the hamper).	Responsibility.
Choosing TV shows from appropriate choices offered by parents.*	Decision making.
Retelling the sequence of events and main ideas from TV shows.	Sequencing, finding main idea, increasing attention span.
Making a calendar of jobs, by days of the week. The child checks off the jobs as they are done. (Post the calendar on the refrigerator as a reminder.)	Decision making, responsibility, sequencing, organizing.

** As always, you should monitor television choices to rule out violence and other inappropriate material.*

Sincerely,

Categorizing

Objectives

- Categorizing activities as safe and unsafe
- Decision making

Materials

- Copies of the activity sheet
- Crayons or markers

Activity

Pass out the activity sheets to the children. Help the children notice that McGruff and Scruff are engaged in safe and healthy activities on the sheet. Discuss the activities shown with the children.

Have them circle the safe activities and draw an "X" through the unsafe ones. You may want to locate one safe and one unsafe activity as a group (or, if you think it's necessary, locate all safe and all unsafe activities depicted on the sheet as a group) before having children complete the paper independently.

Variations

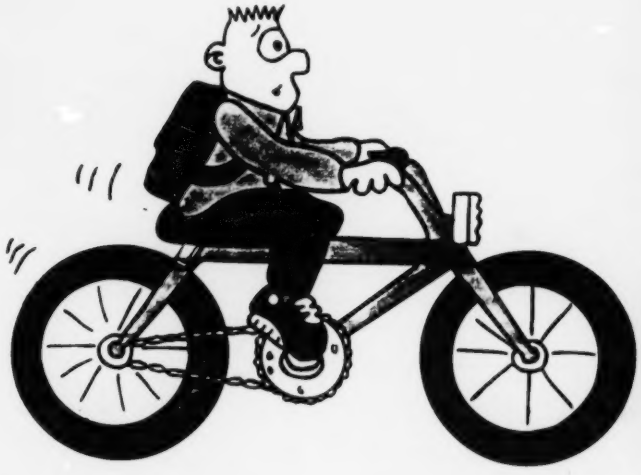
Pass out the activity sheets to the children. Go through the activities one at a time, as a group, and discuss them. Have the children decide whether each is safe or unsafe (or healthy and unhealthy) and why.

Prepare two boxes for the room. Cereal or shoe boxes work well. Cover them with colored paper. Label one box "healthy," and attach a happy face, and the other box "unhealthy," with a sad face. Have the children cut out the pictures from the activity sheet and place each in the appropriate box. You could also have them cut out pictures from magazines (or bring them in from home) of people engaged in healthy and unhealthy activities to put in the appropriate box.

Categorizing

Directions: Circle the safe activities and put an "X" over any unsafe ones.

What kinds of things are McGruff and his nephew Scruff doing?



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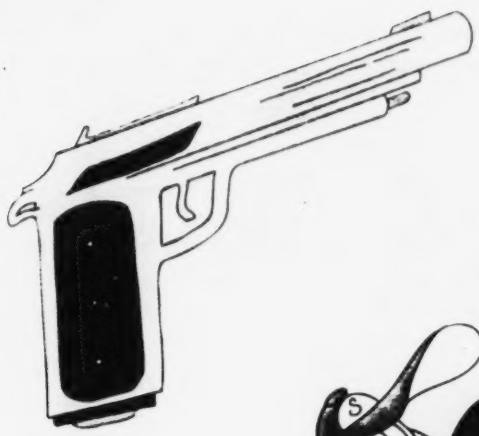

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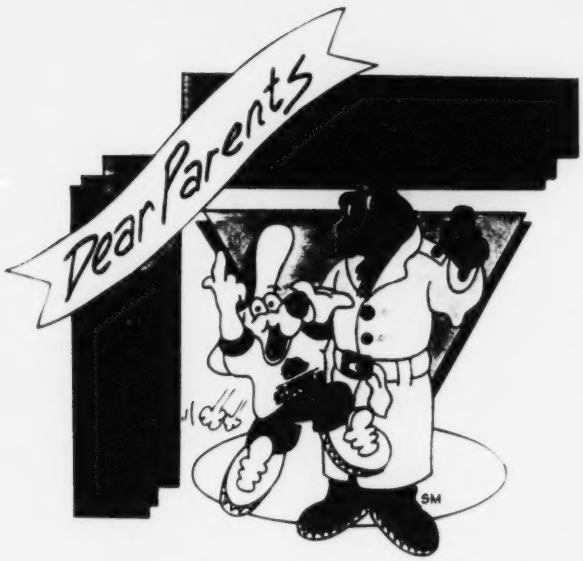


Your child has been learning about categories, relationships, and grouping. We did a categorizing lesson that focused on the difference between safe and unsafe activities. The children circled the activities that were safe and marked an "X" over the unsafe ones. Ask to see the activity sheet your child brought home from school today.

Your child may be eager to share this skill with you. Let your child explain why each item went into one category or the other. Talk about other things that might fit into one of the categories, and ask your child where he or she thinks they belong.

Have a good time talking to your child. If you have any books about good and healthy foods and activities, read them with your child. You can extend the discussion to other sorting categories, including healthy/unhealthy, tall/short, young/old, or right/wrong. Your child will enjoy helping and working with you.

Sincerely,

Teachers

Making Warning Signs and Symbols

Objectives

- Critical thinking
- Decision making
- Health and safety

Materials

- Construction paper
- Markers
- Crayons
- Pictures or samples of warning signs

Activity

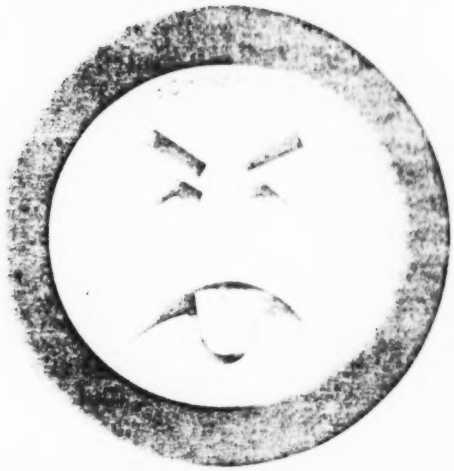
Discuss the fact that there can be dangerous items in our homes or neighborhoods that could hurt people—the children themselves, a brother or sister, or a friend.

Ask the children if they know what warning signs are. You may want to display the examples depicted on the next page and ask the children what each one warns us about.

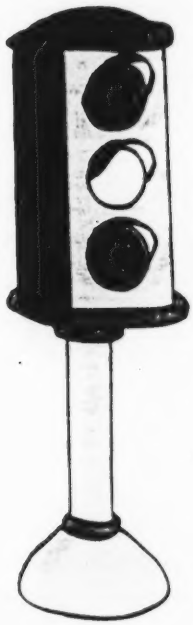
Other symbols could include a finger against the lips (for quiet), a police officer's hand held up to mean STOP, blinking lights on a school bus, the "Mr. Yuk®" poison symbol, and the "Icky" the skunk symbol to warn against inhaling harmful substances. If you are able to actually show the children pictures of these or other symbols, it may help them to further understand what warning signs are.

As they discuss these signs and symbols, have the children talk about what in their houses could be dangerous if used the wrong way. They'll think of many things, and you may add some. Examples would include spray liquids for clothes, bug spray, electrical appliances, and lighters and matches. You may want to make a list on the chalkboard or chart paper of the children's ideas and/or draw a quick picture of the things they mention to the group.

Explain that the children are going to design their own warning symbol to place on dangerous items at home, so that people who look at the sign will know that the item is potentially dangerous. You can make several copies of the symbol each child designs and send them home to be applied, with the supervision of a parent, to dangerous household items. Remind the children that some household items already have warning symbols on them, but it is okay for them to add another symbol.



Permission to use the "Mr. Yuk®" symbol was given by Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh.



Today your child learned about the meaning and importance of warning signs, such as the "Mr. Yuk®" poison symbol. He or she designed a warning sign to place on possibly dangerous items around your home and remind others that these items may be unsafe.

Several copies of your child's symbol are enclosed with this letter. Please help your child locate and identify potentially unsafe items and attach the new warning label to them. You may want to include cleaning products, insecticides, lighters and matches, the stove, etc.

We recommend that you focus on items that are already familiar to your child. It is not necessary to point out items that are locked in areas your child would not normally encounter.

One of the most important things your child may need to be warned about is guns. While we did not address this in school, you should be aware that every two days, one whole classroom of kids under the age of 19 is killed by guns; and many more are injured. If you choose to own firearms—handguns, rifles, or shotguns—you may want to consider removing them, especially handguns, from your home. At the very least, make sure they are unloaded and securely stored, and ensure that your children understand that they are never to touch firearms—certainly not without your permission and direct supervision. Invest in trigger locks, a gun cabinet with a sturdy lock, and pistol lock boxes. Lock up ammunition separately.

Thank you for helping to keep your child safe in your home.

Sincerely,

Growing Healthy and Strong

Objectives

- Decision making
- Learning about healthy foods
- Self-esteem
- Cooperation

Materials

- Large butcher paper, cut into sheets slightly longer than the height of each child
- Crayons
- Scissors
- Glue
- Magazines

Activity

Display a picture of McGruff and Scruff, such as the one shown on the cover of this activity book. Tell the students, "McGruff wants us to grow up healthy and strong. He wants his nephew Scruff to grow up healthy and strong, too. What do you think McGruff would want you to put in your body so that you will grow up to be healthy and strong?"

- Let children discuss safe and healthy foods that they know are good for them.

After discussing the things the students think McGruff would want them to eat, tell them, "McGruff wants us to stay away from unhealthy foods that do not help our bodies and may hurt us. What things do you think McGruff would tell you not to put in our bodies?"

- Let the children discuss harmful and unsafe foods, as well as dangerous things like drugs, poisons, and other chemicals, etc., as you see fit. If a dangerous substance is a particular problem in your community, you may want to focus the children's attention on this substance, if none of them brings it up.
- Have a student volunteer lie down on a piece of butcher paper so you can model to the whole class how to trace around his or her body with a pencil.
- Next, divide the children into pairs, either self-selected or teacher-selected. Each pair of children should have two large pieces of butcher paper. Each child outlines the body of the partner, who lies face-up on the butcher paper.

***Please note**: Depending on the maturity of the children, you—or an aide or parent—can draw silhouettes of each child.*

- Children can then color in their own silhouette but should leave the stomach area blank.
- Label each child's picture with his or her name at the bottom.

- Have the children look for pictures of different foods in magazines (or you can give each pair a set of pictures already cut out) that include healthy and unhealthy foods, as well as other items that are dangerous to put in your body.
- Have the children paste pictures of what is good to put into their bodies on the inside of their outline and all unhealthy items on the outside of their outlines.
- After the children's "healthy bodies" are finished, hang them on the walls. Make a caption, "McGruff and Scruff like what we put in our bodies to be healthy and drug free."
- Talk about the pictures for several days, and let other classes enjoy seeing your work. After a while, let each child take the work home to share with his or her family.

Please note: *If time is limited, children can draw and color the silhouettes one day and paste pictures inside them the next.*

Variation

You could extend the healthy foods concept by having a "tasting party" during snack time. Different types of healthy foods could be prepared and sampled by the children.

We want your child to know what substances are safe to put in his or her mouth and what are not. Your child has been learning about healthy and unhealthy foods. We talked about the need to eat healthy foods to grow up strong and well. We also talked about the importance of not putting potentially harmful substances into our bodies.

The children decorated outlines of their bodies to represent themselves. They pasted pictures of healthy foods and substances that can go into their bodies inside the outlines. Foods or other substances that are unhealthy or unsafe were placed outside.

We hope you can display your child's "safe and healthy body" outline. You may want to encourage your child to talk about the choices he or she made and to add to the pictures together.

Let your child know you are proud to see how much he or she is learning about how to stay healthy and drug free.

Sincerely,

Teachers

Healthy Habits

Objectives

- Helping others
- Learning good health habits

Materials needed

- Poster board or paper
- Markers and/or crayons

Activity

Explain why personal health habits are so important. They keep us and others—our families and friends—healthy so we can feel well, do our jobs, go to school, and help other people in our neighborhoods and communities.

You may want to begin the discussion with the term "germs." This is something the children probably have heard before and of which they may have a basic understanding. Discuss personal behaviors that help others stay well by keeping germs from spreading. Some examples:

- washing your hands before handling food
- washing your hands after using the bathroom
- covering your mouth when coughing and sneezing and washing your hands afterward
- staying home when you're sick
- using a tissue to blow your nose and then throwing it away

Have the students, either individually or in small groups, draw posters showing themselves helping others by not spreading illness or disease. They may want to put McGruff and Scruff in the pictures as helpers too—McGruff may be helping Scruff to remember!

As the posters are shared, help them to see that helping prevent the spread of diseases is helping others, in the same way as opening a door, taking turns, or helping a friend with a task.

Display the posters throughout the school, if possible.

Variations

Have the children draw their own faces and glue a tissue over the mouth.

Have the children trace their own hands, color one "dirty," and then add a real bar of soap (travel size) to the clean hand. (Taking home a real bar of soap is a special treat!)

(Adapted from *Learning to Live Drug-Free*, U.S. Department of Education)

We talked today in school about how personal health habits help keep us and other people healthy and how developing these habits shows that your child cares about others and is developing a sense of responsibility.

It may be hard for your child to remember that preventing the spread of disease helps others in the same way as opening a door, taking turns, or helping at home with a baby brother or sister. Children's families are very important to them, and they respond well when they understand how they can help their family and friends feel well, do their jobs, and go to school.

The children made posters showing how they can help others stay healthy. We are displaying these in our school. We talked about five habits:

- washing hands before handling food
- washing hands after using the bathroom
- covering the mouth when coughing or sneezing and washing hands afterward
- staying home when sick
- blowing stuffy nose using a tissue, which is then thrown away

Talk to your child about what he or she drew and discuss what else was learned about good health habits. Praise your child when he or she practices these good habits.

Thanks for helping to reinforce these ideas!

Sincerely,

Teachers

Fishing Fun

Objectives

- Decision making
- Categorizing
- Cooperation

Materials

- "Fishing pond" (large plastic bowl or tub, which children "fill" with make-believe water only)
- Several fishing poles (12-inch sticks with string fastened securely on the ends and a magnet tied to the end of each string)
- "Fish"—cut-out pictures from catalogs and magazines of 15 safe, healthy things to do and 8 unsafe, unhealthy things to do. The pictures can range from children playing sports or reading to adults , moking cigarettes. You may want to glue the pictures to fish shapes cut out of construction paper.
- Paper clips on every "fish"

Activity

Game rules:

- Children work in pairs, taking turns.
- One child drops the magnet at the end of his or her line into the pond and pulls up a catch. If it is a "safe fish," the fisher keeps it. If it is an "unsafe fish," it goes back into the pond, and the fisher continues until a good fish is caught.
- The other child takes a turn.
- The children continue playing until they catch the limit for the day (announced at the beginning of play as "five," for instance).

Variation

You can make other sets of fish for "People I trust," "Safe places to play," etc. McGruff and Scruff can be pictured somewhere in each set.

Child can play alone until he or she catches the "limit."

What Do You Know About Drugs?

Objectives

- Learning about health and safety
- Distinguishing between good drugs (medicines) and bad drugs
- Learning from whom to accept medicines
- Understanding how drugs affect the body

Materials

- Chalkboard or butcher paper
- Chalk or different colored markers
- Paper and crayons for student drawings

Activity

***Please note**: Because the material presented in this activity is for more mature children, we recommend using it only with five-year-olds. Since it is very involved as well, it should take place over three days.*

Use discretion about what drugs are appropriate to address in your particular school and community. The best approach may be to refer only to the drugs that the children bring up or those with which you know the children are familiar. Be aware that talking about certain drugs or other harmful activities (for example, sniffing glue) may pique children's interest and lead them to experiment. It's vital to emphasize the very harmful effects of drug abuse with the children. To curb any potential interest they may have in trying drugs you mention, make your disapproval of drug use clear.

Day One

Introduce a discussion about drugs by having the children brainstorm names of drugs that they are familiar with. Record what they say on the chalkboard or butcher paper. (If the children give "slang" names or names that are not familiar to you, ask them to elaborate—explain that some drugs are called by several different names.) When the children have finished, supplement their list, if necessary, so it includes, at a minimum:

- aspirin
- vitamins
- pills
- liquid medicines (for example, cough syrups)
- alcohol
- tobacco

To stimulate the children's thinking, it may be helpful to have pictures of things they will be familiar with, like aspirin bottles, cigarettes, beer, etc. Also, as you list the children's ideas, sketch a picture of an aspirin bottle next to the word "aspirin," and so on, for all items on the list.

Thank the children for their help. Explain that there are many kinds of drugs. Some are good for us and some are bad, and to stay safe and healthy, it is important to know the difference between good and bad drugs. Some drugs that can help us get better when we are sick can be bad if we take too much.

Introduce the activity by saying, "Today we are going to talk about good drugs and who can give them to you. Tomorrow we will talk about bad drugs."

Ask students for examples of how drugs can help us (suggest, or add to what they say, that such situations include when we are sick and when our bodies hurt). "These kinds of good drugs are called medicines."

As you go through the list the class made, ask, "Which of the drugs we named are medicines?" Have the child who replies underline the medicine on the list. Ask how that medicine might help (for example, pills such as antibiotics when you have an infection; cough syrup when you have a bad cough). Be sure to include the following points in your discussion:

- Good drugs that help us are called medicines—they help us get well when we are sick.
- Children can take medicines from trusted adults—their parents, a doctor, or a nurse.
- We should never take medicines that have been prescribed for someone else.
- Medicines can be given in different ways—by mouth (pills, liquids, sprays), through a muscle or vein (shots), on the skin (lotions or ointments, rubbed or sprayed), or in drops (for example, ear drops).

It is very important that students understand as well that even medicines that help us when we are sick can be harmful if we take too much or take them without the help of a parent or doctor. Explain that some people must take medicines every day for a particular condition, and their doctor is very careful about checking up on them to make sure the medicine is continuing to help their bodies.

Check for the students' understanding by asking them to give a "thumbs up" signal (for agreement) or "thumbs down" (for disagreement) to the following statements:

- A medicine like Tylenol® is an example of a good medicine when it is given to you by your parent, doctor, or nurse.
- Children can take medicines from their friends.
- One way you get medicine is by getting a shot in your arm.
- Your parents can give you medicine when you are sick.
- It's okay to take cough medicine that a doctor prescribed for your friend.

After discussing the medicines, tell the students that tomorrow you will be talking about the other drugs on the list.

Today we began a discussion about drugs. We thought of the names of as many drugs as we could, and our list included:

We then divided the list into two categories—good drugs and bad drugs. Today we talked about the good drugs, such as vitamins and medicines, that can help us feel better when they are taken in the right ways. We emphasized the following points about these drugs:

- Children can take medicines from you, their doctor, or a nurse.
- We should never take medicines that have been prescribed for someone else, even if we have the same sickness.
- Medicines can help us only if we take them by following the directions on the bottle or from the doctor.
- Medicines can be given in different ways—by mouth (pills, liquids, sprays), by injection into a muscle or vein (shots), by rubbing onto the skin (lotions or ointments), or by drops (such as eye drops or ear drops).

You may want to discuss these issues further with your child and tell him or her if there are any other trusted adults (such as an aunt or uncle) from whom they can take medicines. We also talked today about how medicines can be harmful if taken too much or in the wrong way. If there is anyone in your home who takes medicine every day, this is a good time to discuss that with your child. Your child should understand that there are times when it is important to take a medicine every day in order to stay healthy.

Be sure that all drugs and medicines in your home are in a secure place that your child is not able to get into on his or her own. Thank you for helping your child learn about being safe and healthy.

Sincerely,

What Do You Know About Drugs?

Day Two

Introduce today's activity by displaying the previous day's list of drugs and asking the children, "Who remembers what we talked about last time?" Help students recall yesterday's discussion about drugs and medicines that can help us, and remind them that today you will be talking about the drugs from the list that are bad for us. Children should know these general things about all drugs:

- All drugs change the way the body and/or brain works.
- Some drugs change the way people think, feel, and act.

Explain that the good drugs we talked about yesterday change the way we feel (if taken correctly)—for example, when we are sick, they help us to feel better—but the unsafe drugs we will talk about today change the way the body works and can be harmful. Remind students that all drugs (even medicines) are harmful if people take too much or don't follow the guidance of a trusted person, and that there are some drugs that are unsafe and harmful no matter how they are taken.

Go through the list with the children, highlighting these unsafe drugs listed. (You could highlight them by putting a sad face, or other symbol of your choice, next to each.) It should be made very clear that alcohol and tobacco are in fact drugs, since many children have the impression that they are not. The children should understand that while it is legal for adults to use alcohol and tobacco, their use is against the law for children because these drugs can keep young people's bodies from working right and from growing and becoming strong.

You may want to show some magazine pictures of various alcoholic drinks (for example, beer, wine, wine coolers, mixed drinks) and cigarettes to show the children exactly what it is they should avoid. Children can understand that taking these drugs can have the following effects on their bodies:

Alcohol

- Makes it hard for your arms and legs to work right
- Makes it hard to see well and speak clearly
- Makes it hard to walk or even stand up
- Hurts the inside of your body by making you feel sick, changing the way you think and feel, and making you confused
- Makes your breath smell bad
- Is against the law for children to use

Tobacco

- Hurts your lungs and makes it harder to breathe
- Hurts your heart, making it hard to pump blood through your body
- Can cause cancer and other diseases
- Makes you get sick more than people who don't smoke
- Gives you smelly breath, hands, clothes, and hair
- Turns your teeth and fingers yellow
- Is against the law for children to use

Please note: *Keep in mind the needs of your students and the situation in your community. Before you discuss other drugs, decide if they are something to which the children are exposed in your community. If this is the case, the children need to be aware of the harmful effects of these drugs.*

Marijuana

- Hurts the lungs and heart
- Changes the way the brain works, making it harder to think, learn, and remember things
- Is against the law for everyone (adults and children) to use

Cocaine/Crack

- Hurts your brain, heart, and lungs
- Is very hard to stop using once someone tries it
- Can even kill people who use it
- Is against the law for everyone to use

Today we talked about the kinds of drugs that can be harmful to our bodies. The children learned about how these drugs can change the way the body and brain work, making it difficult to think, talk, and walk. It is important for your child to understand that while it is not against the law for adults to use such drugs as alcohol and tobacco, it is illegal for children because they are smaller and still growing. This is a good time for you to talk with your child about your feelings on the use of these and other drugs.

Much of the information we discussed today is outlined in the letter you received earlier in the year called "Talking With Young Children About Drugs." Please refer to this as you talk with your child further about today's lesson at school. If you need another copy of this letter, please let me know.

In our next lesson, we will talk about the many ways different parts of our bodies (both inside and out) help us learn about the world. For example, with our eyes we can see, with our ears we can hear, and with our hands we can touch. Our hearts and lungs help our bodies pump blood and breathe air. The children will think about how important it is to put into their bodies only those things that keep them healthy and strong.

Your child will be bringing home a picture of himself or herself doing a favorite activity with a healthy, drug-free body. Tell your child how proud you are that he or she knows how to make smart decisions about what to put into his or her body.

Sincerely,

What Do You Know About Drugs?

Day Three

Ask the students to name some of their favorite things to do—if necessary, help them get started by suggesting riding a bike, swimming, reading, or playing basketball. After each student has had a turn suggesting something, ask, "Do you think the drugs we talked about yesterday (alcohol, tobacco, etc.) will make it easier or harder to do the things you like to do? Taking drugs will make it hard to do all of these things, because your arms and legs won't work right, and your brain won't be able to think clearly."

"Let's talk about how all of the *outside* parts of our bodies help us learn about the world around us."

Write the headings that are in bold below on the board or a chart and fill in the parts of the body listed in the first column. You may want to draw a pair of eyes next to the word "eyes," ears next to the word "ears," etc., as visual cues for the children. Have the students help you fill in the second column.

With Your	eyes	**You Can**	see
	ears		hear
	mouth		taste
	nose		smell
	skin		touch, feel
	legs		walk, run, skip, pedal, dance
	hands		throw, catch, shape, write, hold

Have the students give examples of things they like to see, hear, taste, etc.

"How do some of the *inside* parts of your body help you grow and keep healthy?" (Follow the same format as above.)

Your	heart	**Help(s)You**	pump blood through your body
	lungs		breath air in and out
	stomach		turn good food into things to help you grow
	bones		hold your body together, move around, stand up

"What is inside your head that is in charge of your whole body? Your brain—it tells all the other parts what to do and how to work and lets you think and feel and dream."

"When someone takes drugs, it is hard for that person's brain and body parts to work well or to work together."

It may help to read a simple book about how the body works or at least have one to show pictures of all the body parts as they are discussed.

As a follow-up activity, have each student draw a picture of something he or she can enjoy doing with a healthy, drug-free body. You may want to have a picture you've drawn of yourself doing an activity you enjoy to show students before they get started on their own drawings.

Please note: *If it is appropriate to your students/situation, discuss what to do if children find drugs (don't touch them, leave the area, tell a trusted adult) or are offered drugs (say no, get away fast, tell a trusted adult). You may want to make these separate activities for another day.*

My Book About Me

Objectives

- Self-esteem and self-confidence
- Decision making
- Listening skills
- Communication
- Creativity

Materials

- Sheets of paper with topics (see ideas given below) written across the bottom of the pages
- Construction paper
- Magazines
- Scissors, glue, stapler or hole punch and ribbon

Activity

This week the children will be making a book about themselves! You can choose topics from the list below or develop your own categories. Select and write one sentence on the bottom of a sheet of paper. Then make enough copies of this topic page for each child. Begin by discussing the sentence with the children. Do a few a day, if that's appropriate.

Topics

- What I like to do/eat/drink
- What sports or games I like to play or watch
- What I want to know more about/explore/find/make/solve
- What I am curious about
- What my friends McGruff and Scruff look like
- What my family looks like/I look like
- What makes me happy/sad/scared
- A TV show that helps me

Have the children look through magazines and cut out pictures that tell about themselves. For example, if the topic is "What I like to eat," the students will cut out pictures of their favorite foods and paste them on the activity sheet. Keep the papers until as many pages as you choose to do have been finished. (Be sure each page has the child's name on it.) Then let them choose two pieces of colored construction paper for covers and draw a picture of themselves on the front. Assemble by stapling or threading ribbon through punched holes. Then the sharing begins!

Variation

Have magazine pictures precut and selected or have the children draw their own pictures instead.

This week we asked children to talk about the things they like and the things that are important to them. They found pictures describing these things and created books entitled "My Book About Me." They decorated the covers of their books with a picture of themselves and shared their books with the class.

Today your child is bringing his or her book home to you! Ask about the pictures. Help read what's written at the bottom of the page, if needed.

Your child has done a great job. We hope you'll both share the book with other family members.

Thanks for your help!

Sincerely,

School Family Collage

Objectives

- Appreciation of community
- Creativity
- Communication

Materials

- Paint
- Scissors
- Magazines
- Markers/crayons
- Glue
- Butcher paper

Activity

Discuss how each child is a part of a family that is special in some way. Help each think of something that makes his or her family special or one thing that the family likes to do together. Encourage children to share one thing with the group—you may want to start the discussion by sharing something special about your own family.

Explain to the children that they are also part of a "school family." By understanding the idea of a "school family" in addition to a "home family," the children will begin to learn that they can be members of different groups where they experience the feeling of community or belonging. This concept is not easy for young children—they will need to grow in their understanding. Emphasize the idea that, "Our class is like a big family. Our school is like an even bigger family. We work together and help each other, just like your families at home."

Today the children are going to help make a school family collage. Have them choose a section on the large butcher paper and write their name on it. Then let them choose to draw, paint, or cut out of magazines pictures that represent what they like to do at school. Encourage them to draw or paint pictures of their friends at school, too. Some examples:

- A child likes outdoor free play. Draw or cut out a picture of a sport he likes.
- A child likes to work puzzles with friends. Draw or use a picture to show this.

After the pictures are drawn or painted, hang the mural and admire! Let the children sit down and see how many sections they can identify: for example, "That's Jean playing outside with her friends." Jean could stand up and take a bow!

Variation

Pass out large sheets of paper to each child (colored paper works nicely). Let the children do the same activity as above, but on their own individual paper. Then paste each one onto a larger sheet in rows or a "patchwork quilt" design, or simply hang them side by side in the hallway or on a bulletin board.

Give each child a large sheet of construction paper to take home and use to work with family members to create their own collage, pasting on or drawing things that are important to them as a family (reading, swimming, sports, etc.).

Today we used the idea of families to help the children begin to understand group and community. After we all shared something special about our families at home, we talked about our "school family," and the children drew or painted pictures showing what they like to do at school. We made one big school family collage and had fun seeing what different children liked about our community at school.

Your family might enjoy making a collage together. You could draw or glue pictures on a large sheet of paper to show things that are important to your family or things that you like to do as a family. Afterward, you may choose to put the collage up on the refrigerator or wall to show how proud you are of your family. Or, if you wish, you may want to send it to school with your child to share with the class.

This may be an appropriate time for you to talk with your child about different types of families and family structures. For example, you may want to discuss that some children live with both mom and dad, others with just one parent, and that others have adoptive, foster, or step-parents.

Thank you for helping your child learn more about families and the concept of community.

Sincerely,

Magic Carpet Game

Objectives

- Creativity
- Imagination
- Dramatization

Materials

- Lightweight blanket, sheet, or other large cloth

Activity

Go through all the directions first and model the activity, so the children will be sure to know what is expected. This will help overcome any fear that can arise from being covered up. Depending on the group, it may help to model the activity with two or three children before attempting it with the larger group.

"We all like magic, right? Well, today we are going to play a game of magic!"

Have all children sit on the floor very close together. Cover the children with a large magic carpet (blanket, sheet, towel). Tell the group to listen carefully:

"When I take the magic carpet off, you will be_____(name an animal: monkeys, elephants, lions, cows, horses, etc.)."

Pull the magic carpet off with a magic word or two to add to the drama, and then let the children move and make noises like the named animal for about 15-20 seconds. Then call them back to sit quietly on the floor. Repeat the activity using different animals.

To wrap up the game, ask the children which animal they liked being and why. You may consider writing each child's favorite animal next to his or her name to help build pre-reading skills.

Variations

Let each child have a turn holding a McGruff doll or picture and pretending that the magic happens when he or she holds McGruff. Whisper the name of an animal to the child holding McGruff, then step back and watch. He or she pretends to be the given animal and the rest of the class guesses what kind of animal the child is. The one who guesses correctly gets to take the next turn.

Read about other animals or visit the zoo to learn how the animals really move, talk, and eat.

Talk about pretend and real in terms of television cartoons and other shows familiar to your group. Explore the idea of make-believe versus reality.

Family Photo Album

Objectives

- Appreciation of family and friends
- Sharing or creating stories about family and friends
- Responsibility
- Familiarization with McGruff and Scruff
- Creativity

Materials

- Plastic sandwich bags that zip close (pint size)
- Cardboard liners or poster board cut into squares to fit into the plastic bags
- Blunt needle and yarn or coat thread; alternatively, a hole punch and metal rings or yarn
- Photos of family, friends, and teachers
- Pictures (for example, a copy of the cover of this activity book) of McGruff and Scruff
- Polaroid® camera (optional)

Activity

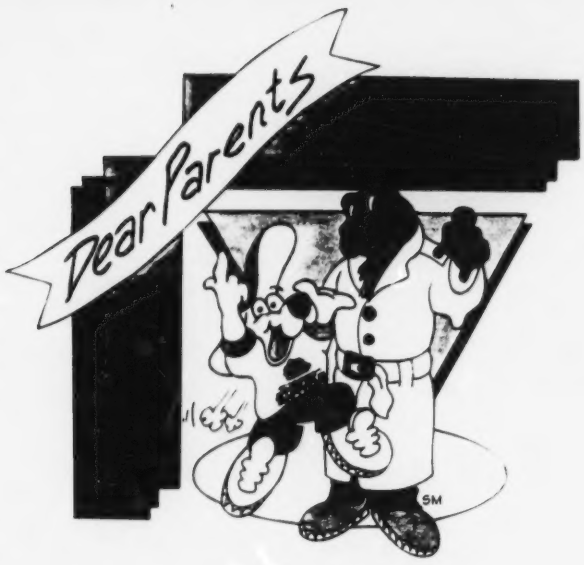
Gather pictures of family and friends. You may want to send the Parent Letter on the following page home a few days ahead of time, so that the parents have time to gather photos. The children can begin to learn responsibility by remembering to bring in "homework."

Explain to the children that they are going to create their own family photo albums. You may want to have a parent or other volunteer assist you in preparing the photo albums, or assist the students in helping to make the albums themselves. Stack and sew several self-sealing sandwich bags together at the end opposite the opening (or use a hole punch and metal rings or yarn, or simply staple them together). Cut some cardboard to fit inside the bags. This makes the pages stiff and easy to turn.

Give each child a blank piece of paper (cut to the size of the self-sealing bag) to decorate by drawing a picture of themselves with their families. Make sure each child's name is written clearly on this page, which will be the "cover" for their album.

Help the children put photographs (or drawings) of people special to the child on either side of the cardboard. Give each child a photocopy of a picture of McGruff and Scruff to add to their albums. These photos can be changed often. Put each child's name on his or her own set. Have the children share their photo albums by:

- looking through the albums with a friend or in small groups.
- "reading" the album to a friend or to the class (by telling about who is in each of the pictures).
- making up a funny (sad, silly, scary) story about some of the photos (drawings) for the class.



Next week, your child will be making a photo story book about family and friends. We will share them with our classmates. All the pictures and photos will be put inside self-sealing plastic bags to keep them clean and safe so the children can take them back home. We will do our best to keep the pictures in good shape for you.

Please send in a few photos of your child, other family members, or other special people in your child's life.

After each child has made his or her own booklet, he or she will "read" it to friends by telling them about the people pictured and listen to others share their albums.

Thank you for your help. We are encouraging each child to bring in at least one picture. If you do not have one that you can part with for a little while, we'll try to find a camera to have on hand to take an instant photo. However, in the meantime, have your child draw a picture of the family to bring into school. This will help him or her remember to do what we talked about in school and to develop a sense of responsibility.

Again, thank you so much for your support and help.

Sincerely,

Believe in Yourself!

Objectives

- Self-esteem
- Sharing something special about self

Materials

- Colored stickers that peel off, on which the teacher has written one word or phrase to describe a positive characteristic of each student

Activity

Talk with children about how special they are. Ask everyone to share with the group one thing they think they are good at or like about themselves. If they have difficulty, help with suggestions such as:

- "Patrice smiles a lot."
- "Luke builds great buildings with blocks."
- "Juan is happy when he paints."
- "Karen shares her crayons."

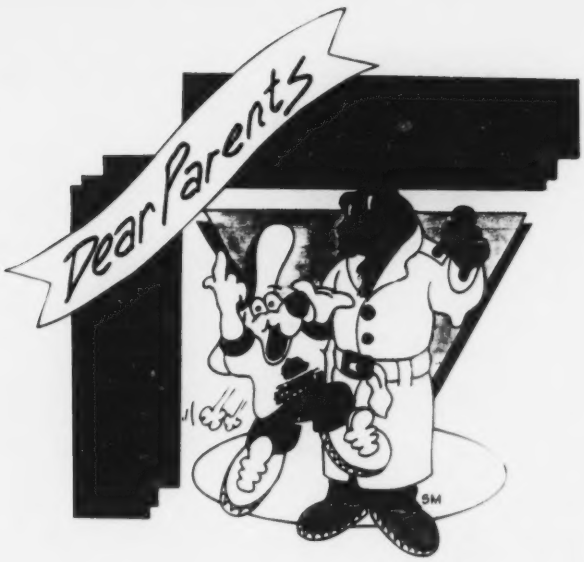
Then choose one word that positively describes each child and write it on a sticker. Use words that describe your children accurately but positively. Words like "enthusiastic," "fun," "helpful," "kind," "thoughtful," "shares," "listens," "laughs," and "friendly" are positive and true about many children. As you talk about the special, positive thing that each child does or is, others in the class will think of more terms.

Call each child up and read the word or phrase on the sticker, peel it off and put the sticker on the child to wear and take home for his or her parent(s) to see and admire.

Variation

If you do not have stickers, the same effect can be achieved by cutting out various shapes (or even making smiley faces on colored construction paper) and fastening with tape or a safety pin to the child.

Another variation is to choose a "child of the week." Each week the teacher chooses a different student to be the child of the week. The child lies down and has an outline of his or her body drawn on a large piece of paper. Then each child in the class names one positive thing about the child of the week. The teacher writes each statement somewhere on the drawn body. The child's name is put at the top and the picture is hung up in the classroom for everyone to see until the next child is chosen.



Today we talked about how each child in our class is very special. The children had a chance to share something that they thought was special about themselves. We talked about things they like to do, thought they did well, or were interested in doing.

Each child received a sticker with a special word or phrase on it that describes something special about him or her. Ask your child about it. It will probably still be saved, either on their clothes or someplace special.

Children want very much to please. It helps that they know you love them as they are. Talk about all the things you and other family members find special about your child. Showing how you recognize the special things about your child will help affirm his or her self-image as a valuable and loved person. Even praise for "trying hard" can help.

Thank you for sharing your special child!

Sincerely,

How Do You Feel Today?

Objectives

- Learning about emotions
- Learning to express feelings appropriately
- Interpreting feelings through mime
- Drawing pictures of feelings

Materials

- Pictures that show faces expressing a variety of feelings
- Crayons, paints, pencils
- Magazines, scissors (optional)
- Paper plates
- Popsicle sticks

Activity

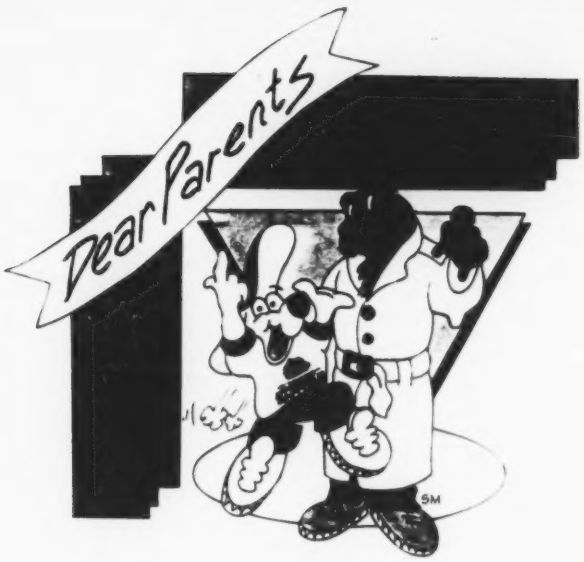
Ask the children how they feel right now—happy, comfortable, excited, sad, scared, disappointed, etc. Ask how they think they would feel if... (offer various situations: McGruff came to your classroom, your best friend called you on the phone, Dad said you and he can get pizza tonight for dinner, you got lost in the store, your dog ran away, etc.) Ask children to show each other how their faces look when they have some of these different feelings. Have the children guess what face classmates are making—what emotion does it show? You can also have them look into mirrors to see what emotions their faces express.

Have the children choose a feeling they would like to draw. As they come up and whisper in your ear what kind of face they are going to draw, give each child a paper plate, and tell them it is a "face." Have them draw how their face would look when they are experiencing the feeling that they chose. Glue each face to a popsicle stick. Have the children share their creation with the group, and see if other children can guess which feeling each drew on his or her plate.

Variation

Have the children look through magazines for pictures of things that make them feel happy (or sad, scared, etc.) and pictures of people who look happy. They can then glue all of the "happy" pictures on a larger piece of construction paper with a happy face predrawn at the top and the "sad" pictures on a paper with a sad face at the top. Hang these collages on the wall or bulletin board for a display about different feelings and emotions.

You may want to extend this activity over several days or a week and read a story each day about a different emotion. Your school or local librarian can suggest titles available on this topic. For example, on the day you read about feeling sad, the children could brainstorm things that make them feel this way and look through magazines to cut out pictures of people looking sad to be glued onto a larger sheet of paper. At the end of the week, you will have a class-made book about all different kinds of feelings.



Today we talked about emotions. We made our faces look happy and surprised. In the next few days we will be exploring different feelings. This will help the children to understand that other people have feelings similar to their own.

You may want to share some of your own feelings and let your child know that he or she can come to you and talk about them. You have a wonderful ability to enjoy good things and to make things better by being there and listening, and by giving a smile or a hug.

You may also want to read some stories to your child that explore different emotions. Take advantage of teachable moments when watching television together. You can use examples of violence, whether it is violence in the news or entertainment, to talk about people acting that way because they may not know how to express their feelings appropriately.

Television shows can offer the chance to talk about real and pretend feelings too, and to explore how your child thinks about TV and other entertainment that evokes emotions. Some shows can be frightening or sad. Encourage your child to talk about what makes him or her feel that way. And remind your child that it is okay to have these kinds of feelings too; we all get angry and sad.

Your child will want to learn how to solve problems that result in sad or angry feelings. This is a great opportunity to reinforce decision-making skills and to encourage your child to turn to you and other trusted adults for help. Don't forget that a young child will model the way you handle your own emotions. Help him or her to understand acceptable responses.

Sincerely,

Colors of the Rainbow

Objectives

- Learning ways we are alike and different
- Increasing exposure to and understanding of other cultures

Materials

- Magazines, newspapers, books, scissors, glue
- Paper, crayons
- Musical instrument (for example: guitar, autoharp, piano)

Activity

Please note: *This activity is divided into two parts to be done over two days. You may want to photocopy the parent letter accompanying this activity and send it home just before you begin the activities.*

Day 1

Review the concepts of alike and different. Talk with the children about how they are alike and how they are different. You may want to begin by calling up two students at a time and asking the group how they are alike and different (for example, Erika and Jonathan both have brown hair, but Erika is a girl and Jonathan is a boy; or Diana and Jennifer are both girls, but Diana's family is from Mexico and Jennifer's family is from Vietnam).

Start with one or two attributes. Some ideas that may be brought up include:

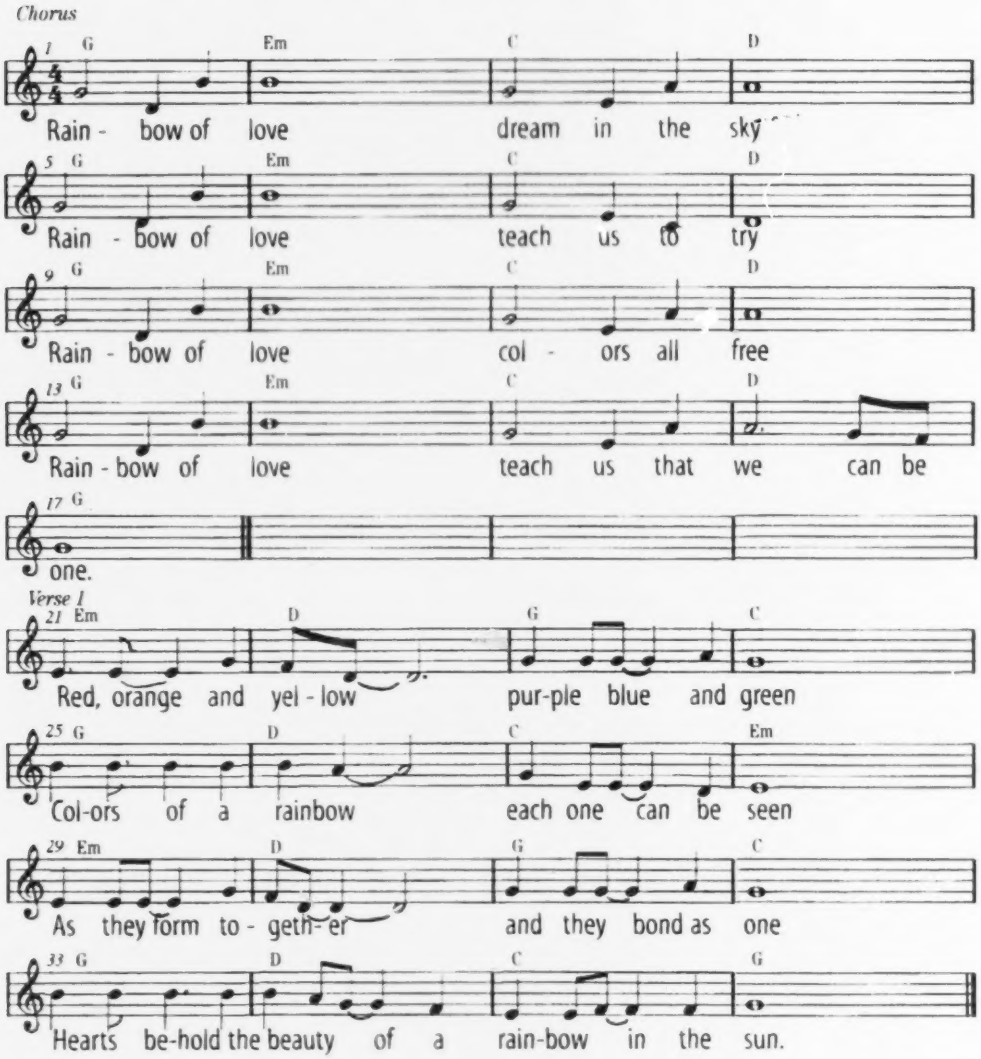
- gender
- size
- clothing
- foods eaten at home
- customs
- climate
- where we live (house, apartment, etc.)
- color of hair, skin, eyes

Have the children choose one person in the room, then draw one picture to show the way that they are the same as that person and another picture to show how they are different from the other person. Explain that each picture will be a page in a book they will make to take home. Make sure each child's name is on his or her drawing. Share the pictures as a group, then photocopy each page for all the children in your class. Staple them together to make a book for each student to take home and share with his or her families.

Ask what is different in a rainbow (colors). Explain how even though colors are different, they are all part of the same rainbow. Teach the chorus and first verse of the song "Rainbow of Love" on the following page.

Rainbow of Love

by Terry Rockwell

©1993

Chorus
1 G Em C D
Rain - bow of love dream in the sky
5 G Em C D
Rain - bow of love teach us to try
9 G Em C D
Rain - bow of love col - ors all free
13 G Em C D
Rain - bow of love teach us that we can be
17 G
one.
Verse 1
21 Em D G C
Red, orange and yel - low pur-ple blue and green
25 G D C Em
Col-ors of a rainbow each one can be seen
29 Em D G C
As they form to - geth-er and they bond as one
33 G D C G
Hearts be-hold the beauty of a rain-bow in the sun.

Verse 2

Just like a rainbow shimmering above, We can join together if our hearts are filled with love.
Let us share this purpose so we may be found, Like many colored ribbons flowing to a common ground.

Chorus

Verse 3

Safe, cared for, healthy, these we'd like to be. McGruff and Scruff can help us—help you and me.
Let us learn together, so we may all live, Happy, loved, and knowing we are special, everyone.

Chorus

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Colors of the Rainbow

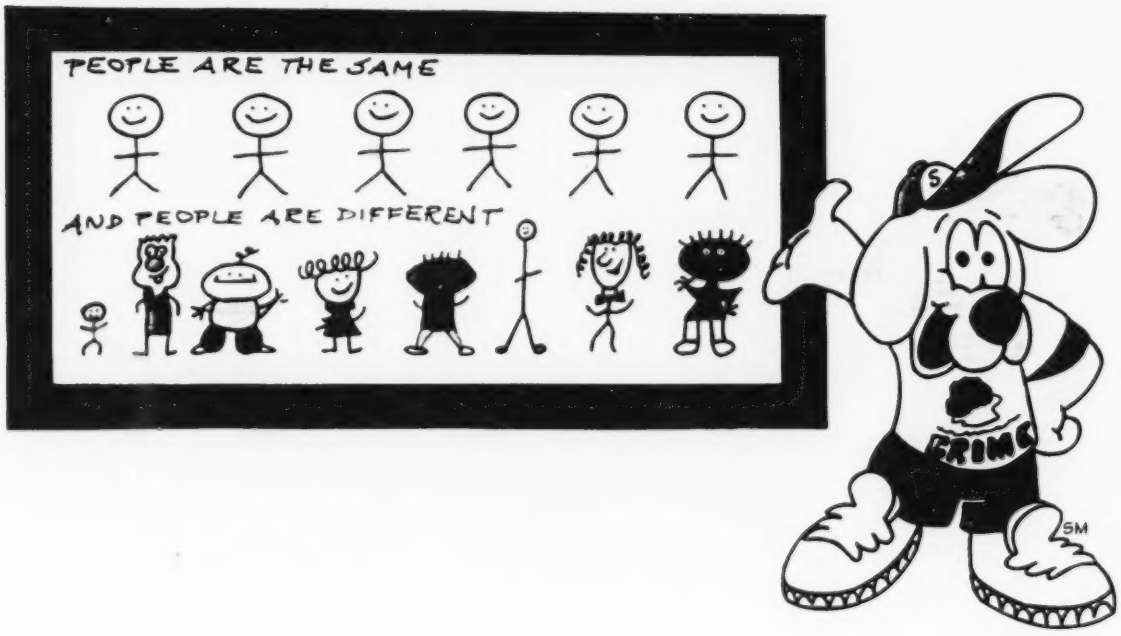
Day Two

Review yesterday's work briefly. Have the children think of other ways that they are like/different from other people in the group. Encourage them to bring in family pictures from home and discuss them with the group. This will help the children to see how everyone's families are not the same and that we all have different customs, ways of dressing, etc.

A map of the world on the wall is a fine addition to this study. Help children locate where their families are from and label the places with push pins or stickers. This can be very helpful in discussing different cultures and ethnicities found in different countries around the world.

You may want to read a book each day that explains about the customs and culture of the various ethnic backgrounds represented in your class. Encourage children of different cultures in the classroom to bring in books, food, or clothing to share with the class. Perhaps a parent might wish to come in to share customs and pictures from their ancestors' places of origin. This is an excellent way to discuss diversity issues sensitively and meaningfully. It's also great for self-esteem!

Review the parts of "Rainbow of Love" learned yesterday. Teach the next two verses, and encourage the children to make up their own verses.



This week we will be learning about how all of us are both alike and different. We will discuss how children in different countries are like us and different from us.

We know that it is important for the children to learn about the many different cultures in our world today. The whole world seems smaller now that we can instantly see far-away countries on television. Understanding other peoples is essential for our children to get along in harmony and peace in the world where they will live and work.

It is good for children to know that there are many others "like them" who share similar looks, feelings, environments. This helps them feel better about themselves. Helping them to see that some things are common to all children helps them feel more caring towards them. Growing up as good citizens and being concerned for the feelings of others are goals for all children.

Please share with the class any books, pictures, or other things you might have about people of a variety of places and cultures. If you are able to send a special food that is specific to your cultural background, that would be great. Also, if you are willing to come in and share with the class any or all of these things, even better!

Look at your child's picture book about how the children in our class are alike and different. Ask your child to teach you the new song we learned called "Rainbow of Love." The lyrics and tune are attached.

Sincerely,

Resources

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Guidelines for Parents

The National Institute of Mental Health, part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, asked the following question of 50 parents whose children had become well-adjusted, productive adults:

"Based on your personal experiences, what is the best advice you can give new parents about raising children?"

Their answers are summarized here:

- **Love abundantly.** The most important task is to love and really care about your child. This gives him or her a sense of security, belonging, and support. It smoothes out the rough edges of society.

- **Discipline constructively.** Give clear direction and enforce limits on your child's behavior. Emphasize "do this" instead of "don't do that."

- **Spend time with your child.** Teach your child to develop a family spirit that gives him or her a sense of belonging.

- **Teach your child right from wrong.** Children need to be taught basic values and manners to get along well in society. Insist upon treating others with kindness, respect, and honesty. Set personal examples of moral courage and integrity.

- **Develop mutual respect.** Act in a respectful way toward your child. Say "please" and "thank you" and apologize when you are wrong. A child who is treated with respect will then know how to treat you and others respectfully.

- **Really listen.** This means giving your child undivided attention, putting aside your beliefs and feelings, and trying to understand your child's point of view.

- **Offer guidance.** Be brief. Don't give speeches and don't force your opinions on your child.

- **Foster independence.** Gradually allow your child more freedom and control over his or her life. One parent said, "Once your children are old enough, phase yourself out of the picture, but always be near when they need you."

- **Be realistic.** Expect to make mistakes. Be aware that outside influences such as peer pressure will increase as a child matures.

Which Parent Will I Be?

"I got two A's," the small boy cried.
His voice was filled with glee.
His father very bluntly asked,
"Why didn't you get three?"
"Mom, I've got the dishes done,"
The girl called from the door.
Her mother very calmly said,
"Did you sweep the floor?"
"I've mowed the grass," the tall boy said,
"And put the mower away."
His father asked him, with a shrug,
"Did you clean off the clay?"

The children in the house next door
Seem happy and content.
The same thing happened over there,
And this is how it went:

"I got two A's," the small boy cried,
His voice was filled with glee.
His father very proudly said,
"That's great,
I'm glad you belong to me."
"Mom, I've got the dishes done,"
The girl called from the door.
Her mother smiled and softly said,
"Each day I love you more."
"I've mowed the grass," the tall boy said,
"And put the mower away."
His father answered with much joy,
"You've made my happy day."

Children deserve a little praise
For tasks they're asked to do.
If they're to lead a happy life,
So much depends on you.

—Author Unknown

Selected Resources

Head Start Publications Center
PO Box 26417
Alexandria, VA 22313-0417
703-683-5769 (Fax only)
A clearinghouse that provides information, publications, and videos on substance abuse, education, learning activities, parenting, and other subjects, including materials in Spanish. One of their publications, *Head Start Substance Abuse Guide*, lists information on substance abuse curricula.

High/Scope Educational Research Foundation
600 North River Street
Ypsilanti, MI 48198
313-485-2000 • 313-485-0704 (Fax)
As a center for research, curriculum development, and training, the Foundation's principal goals are to promote the learning and development of children from infancy through adolescence and to support teachers, parents, and other significant adults who work with and care for children. The Foundation continues its longitudinal study of the Perry Preschool Project, begun in the 1960s.

The Home and School Institute, Inc. (HSI)
MegaSkills© Education Center
1500 Massachusetts Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20005
202-466-3633 • 202-833-1400 (Fax)
The nonprofit Home and School Institute and its MegaSkills© Education Center focus on helping families build children's achievements in school and beyond. HSI works with school districts; federal, state, and local government agencies; corporations; and community organizations.

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)
1834 Connecticut Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20009-5786
800-424-2460, 202-232-8777
A membership-supported organization of people committed to fostering the growth and development of children from birth through age eight. NAEYC provides educational services and resources to adults who work with and for children.

National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP)
1615 Duke Street
Alexandria, VA 22314-3438
703-684-3345 • 703-548-6021 (Fax)
NAESP sponsors many national programs and hosts a national convention for principals, assistant or vice principals, and aspiring principals. It provides services, publications, and videos for parents and teachers who work with young children.

National Association of State Boards of Education
1012 Cameron Street
Alexandria, VA 22314
703-684-4000 • 703-836-2313 (Fax)
This nonprofit, private association, representing state and territorial boards of education, sponsors regional and national conferences on critical policy issues, publishes resource materials for policy makers, and promotes excellence in the education of all students.

National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information (NCADI)
PO Box 2345
Rockville, MD 20847-2345
800-729-6686, 301-468-2600 • 301-468-6433 (Fax)
NCADI distributes a wide range of free alcohol and other drug information materials in English and Spanish, operates a computerized database, and provides a catalog of materials.

National Crime Prevention Council (NCPC)
1700 K Street, NW, Second Floor
Washington, DC 20006-3817
202-466-6272 • 202-296-1356 (Fax)
NCPC is a private, nonprofit organization whose mission is to forge a nationwide commitment by people acting individually and together to prevent crime and build safer, more caring communities. This is done through McGruff the Crime Dog campaign, demonstration programs, educational materials, training, licensed products, and the Crime Prevention Coalition.

National Head Start Association
201 North Union Street, Suite 320
Alexandria, VA 22314
703-739-0875
This organization seeks to upgrade the quality and quantity of Head Start Program services, conducts training sessions and seminars, and prepares organizational policies and positions.

Acknowledgments

This project is the result of the hard work of many people. Special thanks are extended to the following individuals for their assistance in the production of this activity book: Ercell Binns, retired Fairfax County, Virginia, principal, for drafting the text and activities; Janis Ellis and Virginia Cameron, both experienced preschool teachers and directors, for providing extensive review and comments that helped make this book practical. Valuable feedback was supplied by other reviewers outside NCPC: Jean Adnopoz, Associate Clinical Professor, Yale University School of Medicine, New Haven, Connecticut; Jean Bethke, former Head Start teacher; Sylvia Carter, Head Start Center, University of Maryland, College Park; Kristan Daves, National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information; Laura Gattermeir, Program Supervisor, The Learning Garden, Bellevue, Washington; Rosie Griep, Education Committee Chair, Turn Off the Violence, Minneapolis, Minnesota; Theresa Modglin and Carol O'Neill, former Head Start teachers; Officer Sandy Redmon, Montgomery County Police Department, Maryland; Dr. Dorothy Rich, Director, The Home and School Institute, Washington, DC; Susan Saltzman, Education Director, Kid's Town, Dallas, Texas; Deputy Sheriff Buddy Snoots, Fauquier County, Virginia; Lori Williams, RN, Junior League of New Orleans and Committee on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse for Greater New Orleans, Louisiana. Brad Nix provided the art.

This activity book involved a variety of contributions from many NCPC staff members: Jack Calhoun, NCPC's Executive Director (who formerly oversaw the national Head Start program as Commissioner of the Administration on Children, Youth and Families) was enthusiastically supportive throughout. Jean O'Neil, Managing Editor, helped with the writing and editing. Marty Pociask, Production Editor, helped with production and printing. Katie Basinski helped organize the complicated production process. Susan Dooley helped make decisions about how practical all the input was Mike Fisher helped word process and edit the final book. John Rosiak served as project director overseeing the development process. Special acknowledgment goes to Amy Wolfson, who managed this initiative with keen insight, delicate sensitivity, and great practicality.

Special thanks go to others involved in this project: the directors, staff, and children of Bailey's Elementary School, Falls Church, Virginia; Bucknell Elementary School, Alexandria, Virginia; the Parent-Child Head Start Program of Washington, D.C.; St. John's Lutheran Preschool, Rockville, Maryland; and St. Paul's Plus, Brooklynville, Maryland.

Evaluation: Being Healthy and Safe with McGruff and Scruff

To improve our future publications, we depend on feedback from professionals who work with these materials. Your comments tell us what you need more of and what you like and don't like. To thank you for providing us with your thoughts on this activity book, we will send the first 300 respondents a complimentary educational poster. Please include your name and address (and phone number) if you would be interested in helping us in the future.

Name _____

Address _____

_____

Phone _____

1. My position is:
   - ☐ Preschool Teacher
   - ☐ Head Start Teacher
   - ☐ Crime Prevention Practitioner
   - ☐ Other_____

2. I have used: (Check those that apply)

Adult Materials

- ☐ Drug and Violence Prevention for Four- and Five-Year-Olds?
- ☐ Starting Out Right!
- ☐ Talking With Young Children About Drugs
- ☐ The Ways Four- and Five-Year-Olds Grow
- ☐ Resources (Handouts for Adults)

My overall reaction to the materials for adults is best described as:

1 2 3 4 5
(Negative) *(Positive)*

Activities for Children

Group Cooperation/Conflict Management/Peer Interaction

- ☐ Let's Meet McGruff and Scruff
- ☐ Can You Guess It?
- ☐ Singing Games
- ☐ Story Problem Solving
- ☐ What's Missing?
- ☐ What Would You Do If...?

My overall reaction to the activities on group cooperation, conflict management, and peer interaction is best described as:

1 2 3 4 5
(Negative) *(Positive)*

Health/Safety

- ☐ Categorizing
- ☐ Growing Healthy and Strong
- ☐ Fishing Fun
- ☐ Making Warning Signs and Symbols
- ☐ Healthy Habits
- ☐ What Do You Know About Drugs?

My overall reaction to the activities on health and safety is best described as:

1 2 3 4 5
(Negative) *(Positive)*

Self-Esteem

- ☐ My Book About Me
- ☐ Magic Carpet Game
- ☐ Believe in Yourself!
- ☐ Colors of the Rainbow
- ☐ School Family Collage
- ☐ Family Photo Albums
- ☐ How Do You Feel Today?

My overall reaction to the activities on self-esteem is best described as:

1 2 3 4 5
(Negative) *(Positive)*

3. Which materials did you find most effective?

Why? _____

4. Which materials did you find least effective?

Why? _____

5. Please check all that apply:

- ☐ The children learned from the material.
- ☐ The materials offer flexibility for teaching purposes.
- ☐ The materials fit well with curriculum needs.
- ☐ The materials help involve parents.

6. I___(do)___(do not) plan to continue using the materials.

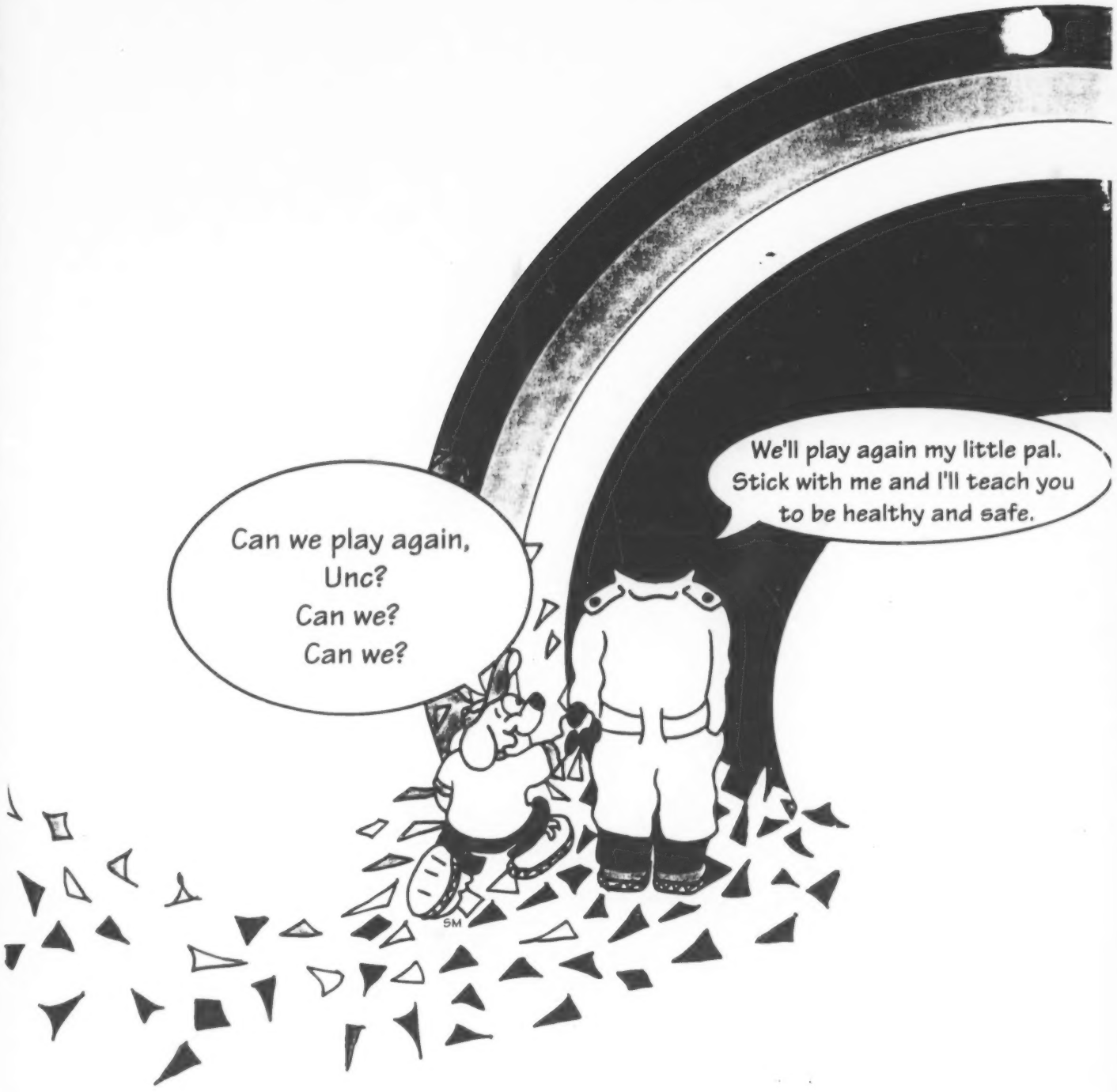
7. Please share with us the creative ways you used or adapted these materials to fit your needs. Please share with us any other feedback you think would be helpful for us to consider for future development of educational materials.

8. What other kinds of prevention education materials would you like to see us develop?

Please specify topics/types of material _____

Please return to NCPC, Substance Abuse Prevention Unit, 1700 K Street, NW, Second Floor, Washington, DC 20006-3817.

That's great, Scruff!
Unc, those were really cool activities we played. And look, we are making a beautiful rainbow!



National Crime Prevention Council
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